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**Singing Subversion, Singing Soul:  
Women's Voices in Feminist Music Therapy**

**Sandra L. Curtis**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Humanities Programme**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
Concordia University  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Singing Subversion. Singing Soul: Women's Voices in Feminist Music Therapy**

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Concordia University, 1996

A model of feminist music therapy for the empowerment of women was developed and, using a case study approach, assessed specifically for its effectiveness in increasing self-esteem of women abused by their intimate male partners. Feminist music therapy integrates the principles and practices of feminist therapy with those of music therapy in the creation of innovative techniques, two of the most important being feminist analysis of power and gender-role socialization through lyric analysis and songwriting. Of the 35 women participants (women at two battered women's shelters in central Georgia), 6 met the criteria for inclusion in the data-collection part of the study (i.e., completion of at least 8 feminist music therapy sessions and of the final evaluation and interview). Effects of feminist music therapy were assessed through analysis of individual interviews and pre- and post-test scores on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), as well as through content analysis of the women's original compositions. Results of the TSCS indicated a marked increase in self-esteem for 4 of the 6 women, and a modest increase for 1. Results on the other 2 measures indicated an increased self-esteem for all of the women. Feminist music therapy is an effective approach for use with women recovering from abuse.

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**to the women participants in this study who have taught me and moved me by their great strength, courage, and creativity.**

**I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of those women who have died because of male violence, to the celebration of those women who have survived, and to the commitment to a world free of violence for all women.**

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# Section I

## Feminist Therapy



# 1. Introduction

The past two decades have seen the rise of a new approach to therapy--that of feminist therapy. Stemming from the second wave of feminism in the 1970's, this approach reflects efforts to meet the needs of women previously unmet in the traditional therapies of a patriarchal culture (Brown, 1992; Chesler, 1990; Rawlings & Carter, 1977).<sup>1</sup> Since its inception, feminist therapy has developed a solid history of practice and research. As a result, feminist therapy has grown both in complexity and in recognition. Although not yet completely accepted within the mainstream, its impact has still been noteworthy (Brown & Root, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992).

Yet the impact of feminist therapy has been slight in the creative arts therapies in general, and almost nonexistent in music therapy in particular. A thorough review of the music therapy literature reveals little reference to feminist therapy. The 1989 issue of *The Arts in Psychotherapy* (Johnson, 1989) represents, with its dedication in its entirety to "Women and the Creative Art Therapies", one of the few instances in which women's

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<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of this dissertation, I will accept Lerner's (1986) definition of patriarchy as the: "manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and then extension of male domination over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions in society and that women are denied access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources, but certainly women as a group have less power, less influence, and fewer resources than men" (p. 239).

issues are specifically addressed at all. Yet this special women's issue does not contain a single article written by a music therapist. Furthermore, within this issue no specific reference by any of the creative arts therapists is made to feminist therapy or to a feminist therapeutic approach to any creative art therapy. Indeed in response to this special issue, Weiser (1990) comments, "Your recent issue of *The Arts in Psychotherapy* signals the question (notwithstanding the many female music therapists in arts therapy practice), 'Where is the feminist in the practice of creative arts therapies?'" (p. 367). This lack of reference to the feminist should not, perhaps, be surprising: In a recent survey of Canadian and American women music therapists, 84% were entirely unfamiliar with feminist therapy, and 37% of those were opposed to the very idea of feminist therapy on the basis of its name alone (Curtis, 1990). In addition to the neglect of feminist therapy within the special issue dedicated to women, psychologist Talbott-Green (1989) contends that the very creation of a special issue is indicative of a problem. It succeeds in '*ghettoizing*' the topic, implying that it is of insufficient worth to be fully integrated. She notes, and in this case history proves her correct, that the creation of a special issue also almost inevitably results in the topic being entirely ignored in subsequent issues.

Some might argue that the fact that the majority of music therapists are women (Baines, 1989; Johnson, 1989b) and that an increasing number of music therapy

articles are written by women (James, 1985) should be considered positive signs.<sup>2</sup>

However, an increased number of women authors does not necessarily imply an increased number of feminists (Talbot-Green, 1989). Nor does even an increased number of feminists imply an increased awareness of or use of feminist therapy. Weiser (1990) contends that, while the special "Women and the Creative Art Therapies" issue of *The Arts in Psychotherapy* (Johnson, 1989) does not reflect the feminist, the impact of feminism has begun and will greatly increase once patriarchal limitations are laid aside. I believe, on the contrary, that patriarchal limitations will not be laid aside until such time as music therapists take a very specific feminist approach to music therapy.

The closest to a feminist approach to be found in music therapy is that approach proposed by Baines (1992) in her unpublished master's thesis, *The Sociological and Political Contexts of Music Therapy: A Question of Ethics*. In describing what she refers to as a '*feminist framing of music therapy*', Baines (1992) attempts to provide music therapists with a model for a more "ethically sensitive practice" (p. 2). While Baines examines and incorporates some of the basic tenets of feminist therapy, her purpose is to enable music therapists to guard against unethical practice by increasing their awareness of the sociocultural and political contexts of their work. In general terms, Baines maintains that music therapists should take this sociocultural and political awareness into their work

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<sup>2</sup>It is interesting to note that James (1985), in finding that women accounted for 10% more articles than men between 1974 and 1984, concludes quite positively that "general parity exists between men and women authors, with a recent trend for more articles to be authored by women" (p. 93). While this is indeed an improvement over the past, this '*parity*' looks quite different if the 90:10 female to male music therapists ratio is taken into consideration (National Association for Music Therapy [NAMT], 1995).

to avoid sexist biases and to provide a safe environment, that music therapists should accept the clients' perceptions as the most valid, and that music therapists should establish egalitarian relationships with their clients. In specific terms, Baines provides suggestions for the *'feminist framing'* of three particular models of music therapy: the activity music therapy model, the improvisational music therapy model, and the Guided Imagery in Music (G.I.M.) model of music therapy. In both general and specific terms, Baines' focus is on ethical treatment of clients in music therapy through the examination and elimination of sexist, racist, ableist, heterosexist, and ageist biases. As such, Baines' feminist framing of music therapy is essentially closer to nonsexist therapy than it is to feminist therapy. While it is an important first step, it is not the final stage in the complete integration of feminist therapy into a music therapy context. For, while Baines focuses on a sociocultural and political analysis on the part of the music therapist to avoid unethical practice, she does not focus on feminist analysis on the part of the client as an essential and integral component of the therapeutic process; nor does she adopt the goals of feminist therapy for her clients. Even in adopting the feminist therapy requirement that therapists must be advocates for social as well as personal change, Baines' focus remains on what the music therapist can do to provide the correct atmosphere for change, rather than on how feminist analysis can be used by the client to produce change. Feminist therapy, however, requires both sides of this coin.

The time is ripe to explore the possibility of taking the next step, from a *'feminist framing'* or nonsexist music therapy to an actual feminist music therapy. In the past, the barriers to a feminist approach have been perhaps even stronger in music therapy than in

other health disciplines. As the *'new kid on the block'*, the music therapy profession has had much vested interest in improving its professional status by emulating accepted mental health professions. It has done so, by and large, without questioning their view of the human experience as male. It has not dared take the risk of exploring approaches not fully accepted by these *'role models'* (Talbot-Green, 1989; Wadeson, 1989).

Yet feminist therapy has been gaining greater acceptance within the mainstream. It has clearly shown the shortcomings of other therapies in meeting women's needs (Worell & Remer, 1992). Since the informal beginnings of feminist therapy in the 1970's, feminist therapists have successfully developed a rich body of theory, research, and practice. The music therapy profession can no longer afford to remain ignorant of their contributions. It behooves music therapists, who are, by and large, women working with women, to incorporate the principles and practices of feminist therapy into their own practice.

Just as feminist therapy has much to offer music therapy, so too does music therapy have much to offer feminist therapy. For although music therapy literature has included no reference to feminist therapy, the feminist therapy literature has included substantial reference to the use of music (Adolph, 1983; Belenkey, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Laidlaw, Malmo, & Associates, 1990; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Some have advocated the use of music with women for healing purposes, based on an intuitive sense of the power of music. Belenkey et al (1986), in their numerous interviews of women, found that many women turned informally to a variety of creative arts: "The arts . . . took care of me emotionally so well. It was something you could do that you love, that you work at" (p. 162). Music therapy goes far beyond an understanding of music's

therapeutic potential at the intuitive level. It has, in its own right, a rich tradition of theory, research, and practice which documents the physiological and psychological effects of music and its use in therapy. If the well-being of their clients is to remain of greatest importance, neither field--neither music therapy nor feminist therapy--can afford to ignore the other any longer. The integration of music therapy and of feminist therapy, each with its own sound tradition of theory, research, and practice, holds much promise for women in therapy.

This dissertation attempts to explore the promise of such an integration of feminist therapy and music therapy. It outlines the development of a unique model of feminist music therapy for the empowerment of women. It subsequently examines the effectiveness of such a model when it is put into practice with a particular group of women--women abused by their intimate male partners.<sup>3</sup> In so doing, this dissertation draws equally extensively from the principles and practices of both music therapy and feminist therapy. Because feminist therapy does so, it also draws extensively from feminist theory--specifically from those feminist principles common to the practice of all feminist therapy: feminist analysis of power, feminist analysis of male violence against women, and feminist

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<sup>3</sup>I choose to use this more explicit, albeit lengthier, descriptor rather than the more popularly-used term *'battered women'* for several complex and, I believe, compelling reasons. I shall elaborate on these reasons in Chapter Seven, but would like, for the reader's benefit, to briefly address this important issue of the naming of such violence here. An historic review of response to this phenomenon reveals a strong and persistent tendency to obscure its true nature. While a considerable improvement over the term *'domestic violence'*, the term *'battered women'* still serves to downplay the role of men. More importantly, it reflects and perpetuates an almost exclusive focus on physical abuse. As well, I believe the term *'battered'* implies that the physical abuse must be extreme to be so identified, that a certain amount of abuse is acceptable.

analysis of gender role socialization and its contribution to the issues of power and violence.

To outline the tasks undertaken in developing feminist music therapy, this dissertation has been organized into three major sections. The first section examines feminist therapy, its understanding of power, its understanding of male violence against women, and its use of feminist analysis of power and of gender role socialization in therapy for women. It also examines specifics of the practice of feminist therapy with abused women. Within the second section of the dissertation, attention is directed towards music therapy and its feminist transformation in the development of a model of feminist music therapy. Details of the principles and practices of such a feminist music therapy are explored in general terms, as well as in specific terms with women of diverse backgrounds--women of different ethnocultural groups, socioeconomic status, educational background, sexual orientation, age, and ability. This second section includes an exploration of the principles and practices of feminist music therapy with women abused by their intimate male partners. The focus of this exploration is on abused women in general, as well as specifically on abused European American, African American, and Native American women. Issues with these three particular groups of women are specifically addressed since they represent the three groups of participants involved in the clinical component of this dissertation. The final section of this dissertation addresses the treatment outcome, as seen through individual case studies, of feminist music therapy with abused women.

It should be noted that, in the preparation of this dissertation, there is one notable and purposeful deviation from the dissertation guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association [APA], 1994). Rather than presenting authors' names in the form of the first initial and the full last name, the full first name is also included whenever possible. This is done with the conviction that it is important for the reader to be aware of the sex of the authors in order to be able to clearly hear the voices of these women and men.

It should also be noted that, while much of feminism and of feminist therapy rests on the importance of the commonality of women's experiences, the importance of the diversity of women's experiences should not be ignored. This issue of diversity is of great importance and is therefore explored throughout the entire dissertation, as well as in specific chapters devoted to the particular issue. Yet this dissertation is written by a single author and is subsequently written from a single personal frame of reference. Regardless of any exploration of issues of diversity in this dissertation, my personal frame of reference--my ethnocultural identity, my socioeconomic status, my educational level, and so forth--will have an impact on my writing and subsequently should be identified. This shall be the focus of the chapter which follows.



## **2. Personal Framework**

Feminists and feminist therapists alike have adhered to the principle that the personal is political, that women's individual lives are characterized by a commonality of experiences. Yet in acknowledging this commonality, we must not ignore the impact of the diversity of our experiences. Our experience of reality is profoundly influenced by our experience of growing up female in a patriarchal culture; it is also influenced by a wide variety of other particular experiences and identities. As a result of these different identities and allegiances, women may find themselves as members of both marginalized groups and dominant groups, as both oppressed and oppressor. Subsequently, feminists and feminist therapists must be clearly aware of and must continually examine the meanings of the individual *'particularities'* of their lives (Brown, 1994).

In examining the particularities of my own context, I shall look at three important areas: my personal experiences and identities, my professional experiences and identities, and my experiences and definition of feminism. My context in each area has and will continue to profoundly influence my thoughts on feminist music therapy, on feminist therapy, and, indeed, on the nature of women themselves.

My personal context is characterized by the contrast of experiences of privilege and experiences of oppression. I am a White, middle-class, educated, able-bodied, heterosexual woman who was born in 1955. As such, I have experienced certain privileges

of dominant-group membership. I have also, however, had the experience of being the *'other'*, of living on the margins: as a woman living in a patriarchal culture, as a never-married woman in a couple culture, as a Canadian living in the United States, and as a hearing person working in a Deaf community.

As a woman living in a patriarchal culture, I have been marginalized and oppressed. The nature and extent of this oppression has been the topic of considerable feminist and feminist therapy literature. It shall be the topic of careful examination later in this dissertation as well. I would, however, like to mention briefly here that violence is central to the lives of all women living in a patriarchal culture (Burstow, 1992). This violence is both emotional and physical, both external and internal in nature: Women are violently reduced to bodies, bodies for men (internal violence); these bodies themselves are then further violated (external violence). Both internal and external violence, or simply the fear of such violence, is an integral part of all women's lives. The nature of this violence and its impact in women's lives shall be explored further in later chapters of this dissertation.

In addition to the general experiences of any woman living in a patriarchal culture, my personal experiences of violence have also played a part in creating the lens through which I view the world and so they too shall be mentioned here. I have an on-going struggle with issues of weight, body-image, and self-esteem; I believe this struggle to be partly a direct result of a culture which violently reduces women to body and then enforces increasingly unrealistic standards of beauty for that body. As well, I have had personal childhood experiences of emotional and sexual abuse. The insidious nature of

some of the emotional abuse was such that it served to leave me questioning the actual existence of the sexual abuse: Was it really *'that bad'* that it should be called sexual abuse? It is only as an adult that I have come to see it for what it truly was--sexual abuse prefaced by the ultimate betrayal by a male adult authority figure.

While I have not felt greatly oppressed in either of my identities as a never-married woman living in a couple culture or as a Canadian living in the United States, I have had the experience that the unquestioned norm, the accepted worldview was not mine. As well, as a hearing person working in a Deaf community, I have had both the experience of being the *'other'* because of my ability to hear (or as the Deaf would say, because of my lack of American Sign Language fluency) and of learning about the profound impact of being the other experienced by the Deaf in a hearing world. It has been a very thought-provoking experience, for it showed me how I, and all others of the hearing world, had so thoroughly accepted out limited world view as *the* world view that not only had we excluded the entire Deaf community, but there was not even a phrase in our vocabulary for the *'hearing community'*, nor an awareness on our part that we belonged to such a community.

As with my personal context, my professional context is also characterized by experiences of both dominant-group membership and marginalization. My education and training within a traditional higher education academic setting have comprised a process of *'professional acculturation'* in which the standards of human development and mental health are based on the white, middle class, male norm and in which the goal is maintenance of the status quo. Music therapists, however, find themselves on the margins

in the area of traditional mental health care. As a new, '*alternative*' therapy, music therapy has not yet been fully accepted by the mainstream. This lack of acceptance, as mentioned previously, has resulted in widespread attempts in the music therapy profession to improve its professional status through emulation of the traditional mental health professions. This lack of acceptance has also, however, resulted in music therapists feeling like outsiders, thus with less vested interest in maintaining the therapy status quo at all costs. Subsequently, I, as a music therapist, have experienced both dominant-group and marginalized-group status.

As with my professional and personal contexts, my particular experiences with and definition of feminism have a profound impact on my worldview. Indeed, as shall be seen in later chapters, each feminist therapist's individual definition of feminism plays an essential role in the development of her practice of feminist therapy. Before addressing my own personal definition of feminism, I would like to provide a very brief overview of feminism and its various forms.<sup>4</sup>

Feminism is an ideology which encompasses many different perspectives, politics, philosophies, and organizational approaches. Ever since the term '*feminism*' was first coined in the 1880's, its meaning has been a source of much controversy. In its most broad sense, it refers to:

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<sup>4</sup>The issue of feminist thought is vast and complex with considerable literature devoted to its examination. As such, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to cover this topic in its entirety. For a concise yet comprehensive review of feminist political theory, the reader is referred to Bryson's (1992) *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*.

any theory...that sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination or oppression, that sees this as a problem of political power rather than a fact of nature, and that sees this problem as important for political theory and practice. (Bryson, 1992, p. 1)

Each approach to feminism shares the belief that patriarchy is not healthy for women and each is committed to changing this status quo. While there is no consensus concerning the manner in which the status quo should be changed nor a single, universally-accepted definition of feminism, there are some commonalities found among each approach (Brown, 1994; Faunce, 1983; Gilbert, 1980; Greenspan, 1983; Hall, 1992; Ruth, 1980; Smith, 1991; Sturdivant, 1980; Worell & Remer, 1992):

1. The critique of patriarchy's limiting definition of men and women, and its oppression of women. The rejection of a system in which men are the valued, dominant, and visible culture, the standard for *'normal'* and *'adulthood'*. The rejection of a system in which women are denied basic rights such as the right to earn an equitable salary and to make personal reproductive decisions.
2. The granting of access for women and men to all roles, not just a limited few.
3. The valuing of women in and for themselves.
4. The importance of independence for women in their personal, political, social, and economic lives.
5. The importance of increasing women's awareness that the personal is political, that social conditions and oppression affect their lives in many ways.
6. The importance of genuine external changes through a socioeconomic and cultural revolution.

7. The importance of understanding the expression of anger and frustration by women as justified under the circumstances, rather than pathological.

8. The recognition of feminism as an advocacy system for women and not a vendetta against men.

Brown (1994) sums up these commonalities in three overarching beliefs shared by all forms of feminism: the belief that the personal is political, the belief that gender is the main category along which power dynamics function in a patriarchal culture, and the belief that women's experiences must be known and valued, with '*humanity*' redefined to include women.

Despite these core commonalities, feminist thought must be seen not as a unified body, but as comprising a number of distinct feminist positions (Brown, 1994; Bryson, 1992). Rather than speaking of feminism, it might be more accurate to speak of '*feminisms*'. In discussing feminist positions, four are most commonly identified: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism (Bryson, 1992).

Liberal feminism maintains that women are entitled to the same rights as men, with the focus placed on women's legal and political rights in the public sphere. The goal of liberal feminism is reformation within existing structures, not their transformation. Rather than criticize the actual institutions of patriarchal cultures, it criticizes the discrimination against women within that system. Liberal feminism has itself been criticized in several areas: its assumptions that male resistance to changing the status quo would disappear once the injustices of women's position were identified; its denial of differences in women's and men's biological and social roles (thus failing to realize that gaining equal rights does

not necessarily bring about equal results); its neglect of the private sphere, including a failure to recognize the possibility of the family as a primary site of patriarchal domination and women's oppression; its devaluation of women in its underlying philosophy that women can and should be more like men; its neglect of the diversity of women's individual circumstances (race, class, ability, etc.); and its ultimate failure to achieve its goal of full equality for women (Brown, 1994; Bryson, 1992).

Marxist feminism identifies class as the primary category for analysis of power. Accordingly, women's liberation is predicated upon working class liberation. For some, however, Marxist feminism is considered an oxymoron because Marxism has been historically a sexist movement. While some maintain that Marxism can be modified to eliminate sexist bias, others argue that because feminism and Marxism are so different, any attempt to integrate the two would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Elimination of sexism alone would not be sufficient, for Marxism fails not only in its sexism, but also in its lack of recognition of the interconnection of all oppressions--classism and sexism, as well as racism, ageism, heterosexism, ableism, etc. (Bryson, 1992).

Socialist feminism refers to those forms of feminism which have as a goal the socialist transformation of the socioeconomic context. Subsequently, it includes but is not limited to Marxist feminism. For socialist feminists, the key to women's situation lies in their socioeconomic context. Recently, this focus has expanded to include the interaction of classism and sexism. Yet the term socialist feminism is used less frequently now because of internal divisions within the movement (Bryson, 1992).

Radical feminism encompasses a number of forms of feminism, but each of these identifies oppression of women as the most fundamental and universal form of oppression. It identifies patriarchal cultures as systems based on male subordination of women in all areas--both public and private spheres. In this it represents a radical departure from the other forms of feminism. The family is identified as one of patriarchy's most powerful institutions. It is the source of women's oppression, an agent for women's and men's socialization, and it serves to maintain the patriarchal status quo. For some radical feminists, patriarchal cultures are seen to control women by means of sexual violence against and devaluation of women. Thus sexual exploitation, rather than domestic exploitation, is seen as the primary instrument of patriarchal control. Rape and abuse of individual women are used as the means to control all women in patriarchal cultures. Radical feminists see radical transformation of patriarchal culture and all its institutions (marriage, family, the legal system, etc.) as the only solution. While initially radical feminists saw gender as the primary category of analysis, they later developed an analysis which acknowledged the interaction of all forms of oppression (Brown, 1994). As well, most, although not all, forms of radical feminism are essentialist in their view of women. That is to say that they view women and men as essentially or innately different but, unlike patriarchal cultures, they value those differences unique to women.

In discussing radical feminism, Brown (1994) identifies three variant forms: lesbian feminism, womanism, and post-modern feminism. Lesbian feminism goes further than any in its critique of patriarchal institutions, identifying heterosexuality itself as one of those institutions. Lesbian feminists question patriarchal assumptions of the normative nature of



heterosexuality and maintain that it, in its many forms (e.g., marriage, mandatory motherhood, sexual objectification of and violence against women, etc.) is an important patriarchal tool in the oppression of women. Some advocate for a form of separatism--the creation of woman-only spaces--as the means to end women's oppression. Womanism, a term initially proposed by Alice Walker, is a form of feminism developed by American women of color which has much in common with radical feminism and lesbian feminism. Like lesbian feminism, it recognizes the importance of relationships between women, although with less explicit reference to sexual relationships. Like radical feminism, it sees radical transformation of society as essential. Womanism or women-of-color feminism was, however, the first to identify race as a category of analysis equal in importance to that of gender (Brown, 1994). Acknowledging the possibility of an interaction of a number of oppressions, womanists challenge the dichotomous view of individuals as either entirely oppressed or oppressor. Postmodern feminism is a form of radical feminism which challenges the notion of a single, objective truth. Instead, it contends that there are a number of particular subjectivities which are socially constructed. Also referred to as post-structuralist, deconstructionist, psychoanalytic, linguistic, or French feminism, this form of feminism maintains that language is very important, shaping our particular views. Its main goal of freedom from oppressive thought is subsequently sought primarily through experiments with language, speech, and writing. It contends that women can only be free of patriarchy when we can think like women; we can only think like women when we can use our own language rather than the language of patriarchy (Bryson, 1992).

With its diversity of ideas, radical feminism in all its forms has made significant contributions to feminist thought. It has also been the target, at times rightfully so, of some criticism. The focus of some radical feminists on patriarchy as the sole source of all oppression has been criticized for its neglect of such other forms of oppression as racism, classism, ageism, ableism, and heterosexism. The identification by some radical feminist of men as '*the enemy*' has been criticized for its failure to recognize that men are also socially constructed in patriarchy and for its confusion of heterosexual violence within this patriarchy with heterosexuality itself. "Under patriarchy, heterosexuality is indeed a dangerous practice; however the idea that it is essentially, inevitably, and eternally oppressive is one that a only minority of feminists hold" (Bryson, 1992, p. 215).

Ultimately, the separatism proposed by those radical feminists who identify men as the enemy is neither a necessary, nor practical solution, certainly not for heterosexual women or for any woman planning to live and work in the mainstream. The enemy is not man, but male power in patriarchal culture; the enemy is not heterosexuality, but heterosexual violence. Other criticism of radical feminism has been directed at postmodern forms for converting the political to the personal. With its focus on individual subjectivity, it runs the risk of eliminating the possibility of collective action. With its focus on language and literary criticism, it neglects the need for political change. With its complex ideologies and terminology, it has been accused of being elitist and inaccessible.

At its best, post-modern feminism can demonstrate how language and subjectivity are socially constructed and so open them up for change, and by stressing the specificity and partiality of all experience it can guard feminists against generalizing about all women on the basis of white, middle-class western experience . . . At its

worst, however, it constitutes an impenetrable jargon-ridden rhetoric of oppression that, by denying all validity to such concepts as 'right', 'justice', and 'reason' ends up with a total relativism that is unable to differentiate between freedom and slavery and that therefore denies legitimacy to feminist attempts to change society. (Bryson, 1992, p. 229)

While this brief analysis and critique of the four most commonly identified streams of feminist thought provides some insight, it is important to recognize the limitations of any such attempt at classification. Feminist theories are complex and not easily pigeon-holed into distinct categories (Bryson, 1992). There are certainly areas in which the various forms of feminism differ, however, there are also areas of considerable overlap, depending on the particular issue in question (Brown, 1994). Classification is also problematic because feminist theories are in a process of continual change or evolution. Feminist theories represent a "dynamic body of thought that is very controversial and is constantly challenging its own assumptions" (Bryson, 1992, p. 6). With an explicit commitment to the constant challenge of its own assumptions, rapid and continual change in feminist thought is to be expected.

As part of this continual change in feminist thought, the 1990's are witness to an increasing convergence of ideas among the different forms of feminism. There is a strong consensus about a core of beliefs: that the oppression of women must be ended and patriarchal cultures replaced by one in which there are no gender inequities; that power analysis along dimensions of gender must include both the public and private spheres, thus rejecting the false dichotomy between these two spheres and acknowledging that the personal is political; that the activities and attributes traditionally associated with women

need to be envalued; and that feminism requires a commitment to the elimination of all forms of oppression, not only sexism.

Yet feminism in the 1990's is characterized both by consensus and by differences. While there is an increasing consensus about core beliefs, real differences remain. This complexity and diversity of feminist thought is, however, a source of strength rather than weakness. If not allowed to mask the increasing degree of consensus, this diversity can be a positive source of tension effective in keeping the feminist dialogue alive, thus reflecting feminist commitment to challenging the status quo. It also reflects the complexity and diversity of women's lives. "For if there are no easy answers, there is no one form of feminist politics appropriate for all women, in all circumstances, and in all societies" (Bryson, 1992, pp. 6-7).

Just as there is no single form of feminism for all women, there is no single form which encompasses the diversity of my personal beliefs. The choice of any one form of feminism over another would represent for me a false dichotomous choice. My personal definition of feminism reflects a choice among the various types of feminism rather than between them. There are valid points made in a number of the feminist positions; there are also points with which I must take issue. As well, my personal view of feminism reflects an evolution over time. Where in the past I may have found more room for agreement with liberal feminism, for example, currently I find greater room for agreement with radical feminism. This is not unlike the various feminist positions themselves. Rather than reflecting a set number of static positions existing separately and concurrently, they reflect a rapid, ongoing evolution of feminist thought. I should add here that my own feminist

development started during my high school years and, until I started my Ph.D., remained outside of academic feminist circles.

In seeking a definition of feminism which reflects my own current feminist position, I accept that of Bryson: a theory

that sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination or oppression, that sees this as a problem of political power rather than a fact of nature, and that sees this problem as important for political theory and practice.

(Bryson, 1992, p. 1)

I also accept Brown's (1994) definition which further identifies feminism as a philosophy:

that aims to overthrow patriarchy and end inequities based on gender through cultural transformation and radical social change. Feminism defines gender-based inequities as a problem and understands women as a valid class or group with experiences held in common because of their shared sex. (Brown, 1992, p. 19)

Stemming from these definitions, my personal feminist position encompasses the core commonalities found in each of the different feminist positions: the belief that the oppression of women must be ended and that patriarchal cultures must be replaced by ones in which there are no gender inequities; the belief in the importance of independence for women in their personal, political, social, and economic lives; the belief that women and men should have access to all roles and that women should be valued in and for themselves; and the belief in the importance of internal changes--increasing women's awareness that the personal is political--as well as the importance of genuine, external changes.

In addition to these beliefs common to all types of feminism, my personal feminist position encompasses beliefs related to the individual, specific types. I believe that patriarchal cultures are misogynistic, successfully controlling women through violence. In keeping with radical feminism, I believe the solution lies in radical transformation. I believe, however, that this radical transformation should include not only laws, institutions, and social structures, but also our basic attitudes, values, and beliefs. I am not an essentialist; I believe that the view of women as essentially, unalterably different from, although as good as, men is simply a new variation on the old theme of women as the '*gentler*' (read weaker and to-be-protected) sex. To view women and men as unalterably different is as limiting as patriarchal views of women and men. The distinction between women's and men's innate qualities and those which are socially constructed provides a positive source of dynamic tension, posing a riddle which perhaps may never be solved. My personal view of feminism does not include aspirations for separatism. I believe that male power and its abuse are the enemy, not men. I believe that heterosexual violence, which serves as a means of social control of women, is the problem, not heterosexuality itself. For all women in their working lives and for heterosexual women, such as myself, in their intimate lives, separation is not generally a viable option. We must remember that just as women and the oppression of women are socially constructed, so too are men and male domination. As we look forward to a change in the patriarchal status quo, so too should we look forward to a change in men and the possibility of looking to some men as our allies in challenging the status quo. A final and crucial aspect of my personal view of feminism is that it is anti-oppression. I acknowledge the diverse and complex interaction

of multiple oppressions in our lives, and believe that to be truly feminist means to actively oppose all oppressions.

Thus is outlined my personal framework in terms of my feminist standpoint, as well as my professional and personal experiences and identities. In each, I have had the experience of being oppressed at some times, and oppressor at other times. Each has had a profound impact on my world view and subsequently on my work which follows--the development of a model of feminist music therapy. In so far as is possible for a single individual, I have attempted to include a diversity of perspectives. Yet there are unavoidable limitations of any such undertaking. I must remind myself, as well as the reader, that this work represents only the first step in the creation of a theory and practice of feminist music therapy. While it is the first, I hope it will not be the only step. I look forward to the future when I might read the work of other feminist music therapists writing from their own and their clients' particular perspectives.

### **3. Feminist Therapy**

Developing in response to the second wave of feminism and the feminist critique of traditional therapy, feminist therapy represents a grassroots movement by women and for women (Greenspan, 1983; Kaschak, 1981; Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Rosewater & Walker, 1985; Worell & Remer, 1992). As such, it lays claim to no single leader, nor any single theoretical orientation. It does, however, reflect a single common desire to find an alternative to traditional therapy--an alternative which would no longer ignore the impact of sociocultural expectations and political structures in women's lives, both within and without therapy (Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990). Since its initial search for an effective alternative, feminist therapy has developed a rich tradition of theory, practice, and research. It is this rich tradition of feminist therapy which shall be explored in this chapter. To do so, the definition, principles, goals, and techniques of feminist therapy will be carefully examined.

#### **Definition of Feminist Therapy**

Rather than being represented by a single definition and a single practice, feminist therapy represents a philosophy of treatment for women based on a feminist belief system (Larsen & Cammaert, 1985; Rosewater & Walker, 1985; Sturdivant, 1980). As such,



feminist therapy has many different definitions, just as feminism itself has many different definitions (Greenspan, 1983; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Rosewater & Walker, 1985 & 1982; Worell & Remer, 1992). As an ideology which stresses the overriding importance of therapist attitudes and beliefs, it is influenced by each practitioner's own theoretical orientation and discipline--be it psychiatry, social work, or even, as shall be explored in later chapters, music therapy (Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990; Smith, 1991; Sturdivant, 1980; Worell & Remer, 1992). Thus feminist therapy can be seen to have many different faces and to take many different forms.

Yet despite these differences, there exists a strong core of commonalities which characterize feminist therapy. It is a growth model, rather than an illness model, using a language of politics (e.g., advocacy, empowerment, liberation, transformation, etc.) rather than a language of traditional therapy (Bricker-Jenkins, Hooyman, & Gottlieb, 1991).<sup>5</sup> It is informed by the feminist analysis of women as an oppressed group in our culture and of the psychological effects of such oppression, as well as its interaction with other forms of oppression such as classism, racism, ageism, ableism, and heterosexism (Laidlaw &

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<sup>5</sup>The attempt to replace the language of therapy with a language of politics has not yet been entirely successful. Instead, a language of politics has been placed alongside that of therapy. Perhaps this is a result of the traditional therapy background typical of most feminist therapists, perhaps it is a result of their continued connection with traditional therapies, or perhaps it is a result of a felt need for acceptance from within the mainstream. Regardless, much of the feminist therapy literature continues to speak in such terms as diagnosis, symptoms, therapy, and intervention. For example, Worell and Remer (1992) argue that psychotherapy, with its traditional medical model and internal focus on pathology, should be replaced by a counseling model, with its focus on positive health and well being. Yet they recognize the need to continue with the use of the term feminist *'therapy'* since it has already gained a certain amount of acceptance. For this reason, I shall also use this term while accepting the counseling mode. This issue of naming shall be explored in greater depth in Chapter Nine.

Malmo, 1990). Yet it is much more than *'nonsexist'* therapy or the mere grafting of feminist perspectives onto a previous approach (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Kanuha, 1990). The feminist philosophy lies at the very heart of feminist therapy, such that it acknowledges the intimate connection of the personal and the political within human experience, and the subsequent necessity for both personal and political transformation (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Lerman & Porter, 1990). The purpose of feminist therapy is not to enable women to adjust to a dysfunctional culture, but to seek social change for all women in order to improve the situation, while at the same time seeking personal change for individual women who have been harmed by the current situation (Goudreault, 1986; Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). Thus feminist therapy can be defined as a philosophy of treatment which is based on a feminist belief system and which has as its purpose both personal and political transformation. While defined in fairly broad terms and open to individual interpretation, feminist therapy has a common set of basic principles. These principles shall be the focus of the next section.

## **Principles of Feminist Therapy**

There is a strong consensus, among the many different approaches, concerning the basic principles of feminist therapy (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Brown, 1994; Rosewater & Walker, 1985; Worell & Remer, 1992). There are essentially three major and overarching principles from which all others derive: the personal is political, interpersonal relationships are to be egalitarian, and women's perspective is to be valued (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992).

The feminist belief that the personal is political, when put into practice in feminist therapy, touches a number of areas. Within this framework, the major source of women's *'pathology'* is seen to be social and political, rather than intrapsychic and personal. Indeed, the very concept of pathology is reframed, with *'symptoms'* being viewed as part of a normal reaction to an oppressive situation. Thus the focus of feminist therapy becomes both internal and external--to identify and distinguish between internal and external factors contributing to women's problems, to address the internalized effects of the external situation, to increase personal and social power for women, and to bring about individual change within therapy and social change in the external world (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992).

The overarching principle of feminist therapy which stipulates that interpersonal relationships are to be egalitarian applies to the client-therapist relationship, as well as to the personal relationships of both the client and the therapist. Thus clients must be empowered within therapy and within their own individual lives. Feminist therapists must not only empower their clients, but be empowered themselves in their own lives, so as to be effective role models. To be and to practice are one and the same in feminist therapy (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Gottlieb, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992).

Similarly, the third overarching principle, that women's perspective is to be valued, applies within the client's life, the client-therapist relationship, and the therapist's life. Feminist therapists are to enable their clients to understand and value the perspectives of women; they must also enable their clients to value themselves. In order to do so, feminist therapists must also value themselves, both in action and attitude.

From these three overarching principles derive a number of more specific principles common to the practice of feminist therapy (Brown & Root, 1990; Butler, 1985; Chesler, 1990; Hyde, 1991; Kaschak, 1981; Rosewater & Walker, 1985; Sturdivant, 1980; Worell & Remer, 1992):

1. All therapies are value laden; these values should be made explicit.
2. The major source of women's *pathology* is sociopolitical, not personal. This is a result of women's oppression in a culture which is characterized by pervasive institutionalized sexism (e.g., economic, legal, and social discrimination against women, limited access to power and resources for women, devaluation of women, etc.). Different women's experiences of this oppression differ as a result of simultaneous racism, classism, ageism, ableism, and heterosexism.
3. Power analysis is an essential part of feminist therapy because, while women should have equal personal, political, economic, and institutional power, they do not.
4. Gender role analysis is also an essential part of feminist therapy because women and men are socialized to different value systems and this gender-role socialization is stereotyped, limiting for both women and men, and a major source of pathology for both women and men. Subsequently, traditional gender roles are to be rejected and women are to be seen as competent, psychologically and economically independent, self-nurturing, and self-defining.
5. Social and political change, rather than adjustment, is an important goal.
6. Relationships of friendship and love are to be characterized by mutuality and equality.

7. Similarly, the client-therapist relationship is to be egalitarian. Because any therapist is by definition more powerful, this might have to be defined as equal in respect and worth. To more closely approximate an egalitarian relationship, the use of self-disclosure, women therapists for women clients, and all-women therapy groups are recommended.

8. The therapist's personal relationships must also be characterized by equality as well as by ongoing feminist analysis because of the importance of therapist attitudes and beliefs. For this same reason, feminist therapists should be actively engaged in seeking social change for all women.

9. Women's issues are frequently dealt with in feminist therapy.

10. Women themselves, their perspectives, their values, and their experiences should be valued. Women must learn to value and nurture themselves.

These then are the ten specific principles of feminist therapy which derive from the three overarching principles of the personal as political, the importance of egalitarian relationships, and the valuing of women.

## **Goals of Feminist Therapy**

The goals of feminist therapy stem directly from its major principles, as well as from its very definition. The goals are as unique to feminist therapy as are its principles and they include both personal and political transformation (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991). The focus of the goals is threefold: to eliminate the oppression of women, to enable women to recover from specific damages of oppression, and to enable women to deal with

the internalization of this oppression (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Burstow, 1992; Kanuha, 1990; Mitchell, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992).

A number of specific goals have been identified as belonging to the practice of feminist therapy (Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Butler, 1985; Chesler, 1990; Kanuha, 1990; Kaschak, 1981; LaRouche, Melanson, & Montpetit, 1983; Mitchell, 1992; Rosewater, 1985; Sturdivant, 1980; Worell & Remer, 1992). These goals are:

1. To empower women.
2. To increase women's independence.
3. To increase women's understanding of the sociopolitical context of women's problems through a feminist analysis of power.
4. To examine the nature of women's and men's gender-role socialization.
5. To develop a self-image which includes independence, a more internal source of self-esteem, and freedom from gender-role stereotypes.
6. To achieve optimal functioning as defined by each individual woman, rather than by either society or the therapist; this does not mean elimination of all conflict, but rather the identification of the cause of conflict and the development of skills to deal with it.
7. To develop intimate relationships characterized by mutuality and equality, rather than dependence and inequality.
8. To enable women to value women's perspectives and experiences in general, and to value themselves specifically.
9. To enable women to recover from specific damages of oppression.

The techniques used to enable women to accomplish these goals through feminist therapy will be the focus of the section which follows. Prior to that, it should be mentioned that, while touched upon briefly here, the complex issues of empowerment and of power itself merit most careful consideration. They shall be examined in greater depth in the chapters which follow.

## **Techniques of Feminist Therapy**

While small in number, the techniques of feminist therapy are essential, distinguishing features of feminist practice. Most have been created specifically to accomplish the goals of feminist therapy, although some have been borrowed from other traditional therapies. These techniques, in combination with feminist goals and principles, create a therapeutic practice uniquely able to meet women's needs.

One specific technique which evolves directly out of the feminist principle requiring an egalitarian client-therapist relationship is that of demystification. Through this technique, which is not unique to feminist therapy, the therapeutic process is demystified by providing clients with information about therapy and by actively involving the client in all its aspects (from goal selection to progress evaluation). This effectively empowers the client.

It is not its central focus on empowerment, however, which makes feminist therapy unique (for that is common to other humanistic therapies as well), but rather its use of feminist social analysis in connection with empowerment which makes it unique (Smith & Dutton, 1990). With the goal of increasing personal, socioeconomic, and political power,

this feminist analysis involves an exploration of both power and gender-role socialization in the lives of women and men (Siegel & Larsen, 1990; Wicker, 1986).

The feminist therapy technique of power analysis is used to increase clients' understanding of the relative societal powerlessness of women and the role that this powerlessness plays in their lives--in itself, in the resultant development of different forms of power, and in the resultant psychological effects of this powerlessness and devaluation (Malmo & Laidlaw, 1990; Smith & Dutton, 1990). This feminist analysis of power enables the client, in taking a critical look at patriarchy, to identify the underlying social context (not only sexism, but also racism, classism, etc.) of *'individual'* problems (Smith & Dutton, 1990). This feminist analysis is not used to identify women as helpless victims of society. Rather, it is used to enable women to see both the personal and societal sources of their problems, to see both their sources of powerlessness and of power, and to see both societal and personal solutions to the situation (Hall, 1992; Lerman & Porter, 1990). For "no woman is simply her oppression or simply her response to it" (Greenspan, 1983, p. 203). Women are both their limitations and their strengths. The solution to the limitations set by societal power inequities involves personal changes--understanding the source, counteracting its effect, and reversing the internalization of these power inequities. But personal changes alone are insufficient--they must go hand in hand with societal changes. "The antidote to female social powerlessness is female power, not only as a psychological state of mind, but as a social fact" (Greenspan, 1983, p. 203).

Thus it can be seen that feminist analysis of power is a process which must be accompanied by social change and which involves more than the analysis of women's



powerlessness alone. Worell and Remer (1992) identify a number of steps in the process of power analysis, of which five are useful for the purposes of this dissertation: (a) collaborative defining of power by therapist and client together, (b) increasing client awareness of different kinds of power, (c) examination of women's and men's differential access to power, (d) increasing client's awareness of different uses of power (e.g., direct/indirect, competent/helplessness, etc.), and (e) experimentation by the client in using different kinds of power in different ways.

The feminist therapy technique of gender-role analysis is used to identify and critically examine women's socialization process--the shared messages received by women (regardless of race, class, culture, age, etc.) and the impact these have on women (Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). These messages are received by women from a variety of different sources throughout their lives: the family, educational institutions, religious institutions, the media, the workplace, and so forth. These messages to women are powerful and, despite some changes, fairly traditional (Chrisler & Howard, 1992). They reflect institutionalized, integrated, and internalized sexism, and include such directives as: women should be selfless; women should be thin and beautiful; women should be nice and uncomplaining; women should be nurturing (Mitchell, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992; Wolf, 1993).

As with feminist power analysis, analysis of gender-role socialization is a process which must be accompanied by social change and which involves more than an examination of the ways in which women can free themselves from the detrimental effects of gender-role socialization.

In describing the complete process, Worell & Remer (1992) identify a 6-step process which is best undertaken in a group setting: (a) identification by the client of direct and indirect gender-role messages received throughout their life, (b) examination of the positive and negative consequences of these, (c) exploration of their internalization of these messages, (d) decision making concerning which of these messages are to be kept and which to be rejected, (e) development of a plan to alter these messages, and (f) implementation of the plan (supported by any necessary skills development).

Thus far, three of the most common techniques of feminist therapy have been explored--demystification, feminist power analysis, and feminist gender-role analysis. Other techniques which are not specific to feminist therapy, yet are effective for women's empowerment include: assertiveness training, stress management training, conflict resolution, anger management, and guided imagery (Ellis, 1990; Van den Bergh & Cooper, 1986; Worell & Remer, 1992). Each of these has been taken from traditional therapies and transformed to meet the needs and requirements of feminist therapy.

In this chapter, the theory and practice of feminist therapy has been explored. Feminist therapy has been shown to have no single definition, yet to involve a philosophy of treatment based on a feminist belief system and to be influenced by each individual therapist's personal definition of feminism. Yet despite this, there has shown to be a surprising consensus among feminist therapists concerning the basic principles of feminist therapy: the personal is political, interpersonal relationships are to be egalitarian, and women and women's perspectives are to be valued. An equally strong consensus has been found among feminist therapists concerning the basic goals of feminist therapy. These have been

shown to include: the empowerment of women, the increase of women's independence and understanding of the sociopolitical context of women's problems, the examination of power and gender-role socialization, the development for women of a positive self-image free of gender-role stereotypes, the development of egalitarian relationships, the achievement of optimal functioning, the valuing of women and of self, and the recovery from the damages of oppression. A number of therapeutic techniques specific to feminist therapy (e.g., demystification, feminist analysis of power, and feminist analysis of gender-role socialization) have been examined, along with some techniques adopted from other traditional therapies.

Having thus explored the nature of feminist therapy and its techniques to empower women in general, the next step will be to examine in greater detail the issue of power. This shall be the focus of the chapter which follows.

## 4. Women and Power

During the course of a 1993 television interview of Hollywood's five most powerful women, I was struck by the similarity of their responses to the question, "Are you powerful?". Not one of the five--neither Michelle Pfeiffer, Julia Roberts, Meg Ryan, Janet Jackson, nor Sharon Stone--was able to give an unequivocal "yes". How is it that these women were unable to acknowledge their power? Or were they truly powerless? Perhaps a hint to the answer can be found in the words of Julia Roberts' character in the hit movie *Pretty Woman*: "I want more. I want the fairy tale." For Julia Roberts, the fairy tale was rescue from a life of poverty and prostitution through marriage to a rich and powerful man. The story is much the same for Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella--a beautiful heroine waits to be rescued by her prince. He will give her wealth and power, but this power is indirect power and ultimately remains his. Some women in the fairy tales are, however, powerful in their own right; they are also evil and use their power over people to manipulate and destroy--they are the wicked stepmother, the evil queen/beauty rival, and the mean stepsisters. "What effect [do these stories] endlessly repeated throughout our culture, have on women's identity and dreams?" (Tavris, 1992, p. 302). What effect do they have on women's views of power?

In this chapter, I shall explore women's views of power in general, leaving the issue of power in women's intimate relationships with men to the chapter which follows. First I shall focus on the internal barriers to power that exist for women.<sup>6</sup> In so doing, a number of questions shall be examined: What is power? Do women want it and should they? Is there a place somewhere between the extremes of Snow White and the wicked stepmother for women who dare to be powerful?

## **What is Power?**

Power has been a topic of considerable and enduring interest. Feminists have acknowledged its centrality in women's lives and since then a plethora of publications relating to power has been seen, first in the 1970's and then again in the 1990's (Griscom, 1992). Yet, despite this interest, power has not proven easy to define. It is a very broad concept which can be viewed at many different levels and in many different ways (Griscom, 1992).

Traditionally, power has been defined almost entirely in hierarchical terms (Miller & Cummins, 1992). In the field of psychology, it has been defined as the ability to control or dominate someone, to win a conflict. Similarly in sociology, power has been defined in

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<sup>6</sup>I would like to make it clear that, in focusing on internal barriers to power for women, I do not intend to imply that external barriers do not exist. Nor do I intend to imply that, because of these internal and external barriers, women are to be seen only as powerless victims. Women will ultimately require an awareness of both internal and external barriers, as well as an awareness of their own power. While feminist therapists will address the issue of internal barriers within therapy, they will also work to eliminate the external barriers to power for women outside of therapy.

terms of conflict and domination, of control and power over someone in a win-lose situation. Miles (1985) articulated and accepted the traditional definition of power as the "ability to determine or direct the behavior of others" (p. 81) even when resisted.

From this traditional viewpoint, power can be seen to take many forms. Chesler & Goodman (1976) outlined 12 forms of power in our culture, of which 7 are accessible almost exclusively to men: Money, consumer, physical, technological, scientific, organizational (i.e., religion and secularized institutions), and military power are accessible almost exclusively to men; the power of social position and social influence are equally accessible to men and women; the power of beauty, sexuality, and motherhood are accessible almost exclusively to women. Those powers accessible almost exclusively to women are relatively short-lived and nonexchangeable, while those to men are of an enduring and exchangeable nature. An exchangeable power is one type of power which may be readily exchanged for another. For example, money power may be exchanged for military power; on the other hand, the power of motherhood cannot generally be exchanged for any other form of power.

This traditional hierarchical and interpersonal/structural view of power in all its forms (*power over*) has recently been challenged by a new feminist view of power as intrapersonal (*power for*). 'Power for' is the ability to be self-determining, to control one's own life, rather than to control others (Chesler & Goodman, 1976; Miller & Cummins, 1992). Power is something to share, rather than a limited commodity to be fought over. It is something to use for the enhancement of others in a win-win situation.

This different view of power has much to recommend it, highlighting as it does new dimensions of a complex concept--dimensions more reflective of many women's own experiences. Unfortunately the recent trend, an erroneous one in my opinion, has been to see *'power for'* and *'power over'* as opposite and mutually exclusive. In this dichotomous approach, *'power for'* has come to mean not only women's power, but good power and *'power over'* has come to mean not only men's power, but bad power. This dichotomy ignores the complexity and multiplicity of power. It also ignores reality for "in daily life, dominance and nurturance overlap in complex ways and cannot be clearly distinguished as bad or good" (Griscom, 1992, p. 406). For example, I believe I have a truly nurturing relationship with my 6-year old nephew and I delight in encouraging his creative play. Yet when I discovered him attempting to lasso the ceiling light fixture, I exerted power over him and insisted that he stop. It was necessary for me to use both *'power for'* and *'power over'*. Nor can all situations be of a win-win nature. For women to gain equality, some men must lose privilege. For abused women to gain freedom from violence, some abusive men will have to be restrained. A choice for exclusively one of *'power for'* or *'power over'* may not always be possible or desirable.

The false dichotomy between feminine *'power for'* and masculine *'power over'* is really not much more than a new variation on an old patriarchal theme: "The institution of patriarchy involves power relations that rest on the assumption of fundamental and unbridgeable differences between the sexes reflected in the multiple forms of polarity" (Code, Mullett, & Overall, 1988, p. 25). The danger with the new power dichotomy, as with the old patriarchal one, is that it limits what women and men can be and can do. It

denies that both *'power for'* and *'power over'* might have value: "It is one thing to disdain the kind of autonomy that signifies selfishness, inflexibility, and psychopathic-like detachment from others, it is quite another to reject the kind of autonomy that means having the power and self-confidence to determine one's own best interest" (Tavris, 1992, p. 89). It necessitates a forced choice between *'power for'* and *'power over'*, yet ignores the possibility that it might be impossible to have *'power for'* without *'power over'* and that this *'power over'* might be necessary in interpersonal, economic, social, and political arenas. The problem this poses for women in their personal lives can be clearly seen in women's own description of their experiences. Miller and Cummins (1992) found that while women surveyed believed societal institutions and men defined power in terms of money and control over others, they rejected this definition for themselves. Instead these women opted for the power of personal authority--*'power for'*. I have to confess that, for me too, this idea of *'power for'* had considerable appeal while that of *'power over'* did not. However, Miller and Cummins also discovered that these women had rarely felt powerful; nor have I.

That women are more likely to embrace *'power for'* rather than *'power over'* perhaps indicates more about the possible existence of strong internal barriers than it does about one true nature of power itself. It raises an important question: Is there something in women's experiences, lack of status, and lack of experience with power that allows women to embrace only the one form of power?



## Internal Barriers to Power

Power has long been one of the greatest taboos for women in general (Miles, 1985; Wolf, 1993). I believe that while we are on the verge of breaking this taboo, we have not done so yet--despite our embracing of *'power for'*. Rather than breaking the taboo, *'power for'* has been used to so redefine power that it no longer resembles in any way that which was originally forbidden. Women and men both have been unable to imagine this taboo being broken, for to do so would shatter long cherished, strongly internalized myths of power and womanhood. These myths are maintained through the process of women's and men's socialization. Pauly-Morgan (1988) sees this as a process in which male virtues (e.g., strength, power, independence, courageousness, and self-determination) become vices for women and male vices (e.g., dependence, servility, self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, submissiveness, and economic dependence) masquerade as *'womanly virtues'*. Wolf (1993) describes this socialization process in terms of mythical dragons which instil such fear in women (the fear of leadership, egotism, ridicule, conflict, standing alone, having too much, and seeing other women have too much) as to effectively keep women from power. These virtues, vices, and fears combine to create an obstacle path of internal barriers to power for women.<sup>7</sup> Each of these barriers "stands in their way as surely as if it were a stone wall 10 metres high" (Schwartz, 1993, p. C2). Ten of the strongest of these barriers shall be explored in the section which follows. They are: the

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<sup>7</sup>It should be noted that some of women's fears of power are legitimate because women have seen power abused; indeed they have often been on the receiving end of such abuse.

barrier of femininity/masculinity, niceness, criticism, risk, selflessness, self-esteem, high visibility, false power, money, and power illiteracy.

### **The Femininity/Masculinity Barrier**

The masculinization of power has been one of the most enduring, yet often invisible barriers facing women. Both women and men have been socialized to believe not only that power is attractive in men, but that it is exclusively masculine (Gerber, 1992; Greenspan, 1983; Miles, 1985). The idea that to be powerful is to be masculine is pervasive in our culture and can be seen even in our language. The familiar old clichés about power are masculine clichés (e.g., to be powerful is "to have balls"). "Power is embodied in imagery wistfully reflecting men's fantasy of superman strength and sexual potency" (Miles, 1985, p. 63). Despite the occasional exception, most of the superheroes are male; even with the rare female superheroes, most turn out to be sidekicks or somehow less powerful--for Superman there was Supergirl, for Batman there was Batgirl. Power has been cast in a male mold and thus becomes the quintessence of maleness, even if this is at times taken to an absurd degree. This can be seen in the great lengths to which a former president of the United States, George Bush, and his advisors went to counter his public image as a "wimp". Even the actual voice of power that we are used to hearing is male. Early in her career, former Prime Minister of England Margaret Thatcher took voice lessons so that she might speak with a lower-pitched voice (Miles, 1985). To be powerful is indeed to be masculine, or at least to imitate masculinity.

The flip side of the masculinization of power is the feminization of powerlessness, for women and men have been socialized to believe that masculinity and femininity are opposite and mutually-exclusive categories. Women are raised not only to have no power, but also to disavow even wanting it for fear of being seen as or of becoming masculine (Greenspan, 1983; Wolf, 1993). Perhaps this explains the inability of Michelle Pfeiffer, Julia Roberts, Meg Ryan, Janet Jackson, or Sharon Stone to either acknowledge or recognize themselves as Hollywood's most powerful women.

Feminists often ridicule the fear in many men that if they acknowledge "female" qualities or do "female" work like parenting, they will become "like women". But we overlook our own parallel irrational fear--that if women use traditionally masculine power, they risk becoming "like men". (Wolf, 1993, p. 176)

Yet if the fear of becoming like a man is irrational, the fear of being seen as masculine is perhaps not so irrational--to be called masculine is a common experience for those few women who do achieve power. Of Golda Meir, it was said: "and let's face it...looking like that she must have been a man anyway" (Miles, 1985, p. 11). And to be called masculine is, for many, sufficient social sanction against women's use of power, for it invalidates their sense of identity (Greenspan, 1983). Our culture insists that women fit a rigid and limiting feminine mold and the stereotypes that make up that mold are very enduring (Code, 1988). To refuse the mold is to run considerable risk. Yet while on one hand, femininity is demanded and idolized, on the other hand, as we have seen, it is defined as the quintessence of powerlessness.

## **The Barrier of Niceness**

In addition to the strong injunction for women to be feminine, is the equally strong injunction to be nice. Women are so socialized to be nice that they must please others at all times, regardless of the situation (Wolf, 1993; Chesler & Goodman, 1976). This fear of displeasing is a powerful internal barrier for women.

To be nice, women must put men at ease, whether at work or at home. In our culture, this means putting men on top, because men are as ill at ease with women's power as women are themselves, if not more so. Men depend on female deference to feel superior (Ramazanoglu, 1987). It is not nice for a woman to be superior. Chesler and Goodman (1976) noted that the body language, voice, eye contact, and touch of women is proscribed precisely to put men at ease. Women's smile is their badge of niceness. Women smile more frequently than men and indeed are required to do so, for the absence of smiling is quickly commented on. In my early high school years, I was perplexed by how frequently I was asked by men why I was so glum. I thought perhaps that my face in neutral had the misfortune to appear unduly melancholic. In hindsight, I realize that I was simply not meeting the unspoken *'smile quota'*. Yet the smile required of women is one of deference; the genuine female smile of self-satisfaction is threatening (Chesler & Goodman, 1976). In addition to smiling more frequently, women also speak with softer voices, apologize more frequently for going first, are more frequently verbally interrupted by men, and stare openly less frequently than do men. While this puts men at ease, it makes it difficult for women to claim their own power.

To be nice, women must also be neither critical nor angry. To do so would be to risk being seen as a '*whiner*' or a '*complainer*'--one of the most popular complaints from men and women alike against feminists. Women are to please and to be pleasing. There is a tacit understanding that nothing is more unattractive, more unlikable than an angry (i.e., powerful) woman (Gornick & Moran, 1971; Tavis, 1992).

To be nice is also to eschew competition, aggressiveness, and conflict-- '*power over*' (Wolf, 1993). These have been discouraged in women by patriarchalists and feminists alike; feminists must struggle, after all, with the same internal barriers that face all women. Rather than face a conflict by saying that men have too much power, it is safer to say that such power is male. In this way ambition, assertiveness, and aggression are virtues for men, yet vices for women. While I would certainly not like to see these untempered by moral responsibility and compassion, to deny them to women under any circumstances is to solidify the barrier of niceness.

### **The Barrier of Criticism**

For women, the test of their niceness is how well they are liked. Not to be liked-- to be criticized--is to fail the niceness test. Many women are subsequently fearful of criticism. One of my biggest personal struggles has been to realize that to be effective at work, I could not always be liked and that that was all right. Wolf, an accomplished writer with a national bestseller, describes in *Fire With Fire* (1993) how she took impersonal clashes of opinion with her writing extremely to heart, while getting only a "fleeting boost"

from her success; she explored various therapies in the hope of learning how not to care so much about others' opinions of her.

Fear of criticism not only makes it difficult to acknowledge and use power, it also makes it difficult to want it at all. In interviews with college-age women, Wolf (1993) found that many saw the punishment of criticism as the inevitable and only consequence of taking power. In the words of one young woman: "When women are in power, they're so highly criticized" (Wolf, 1993, p. 257). Indeed those women who do rise to powerful positions are seen as abnormal and subsequently do receive considerable criticism. This is fostered by men who are threatened with the loss of their masculine identity, based as it is on its opposition to the feminine identity, and with the loss of privileges, based as they are on women's underprivileged position (Miles, 1985). Should women succeed in breaking some of the barriers to power, they will have more positive experiences with it, but for now "power for most women remains as yet an imaginary garden in which only toads are real" (Miles, 1985, p. 212).

### **The Barrier of Risk/Failure**

The fear of conflict and the fear of criticism for women lead to the fear of taking risks, including as it does the possibility of failure. While men see risk taking in positive terms of excitement and danger, women see it in negative terms of disaster and the danger of losing all they have struggled to win (Miles, 1985). For women to risk a competition is a no-win situation. Should they win, they will suffer paralyzing guilt and empathy with the

loser--a failure to be nice; should they lose, they are open to criticism and feelings of inferiority. To risk taking power is fearful.

### **The Barrier of Selflessness**

To take power would also break one of the strongest injunctions for women--the injunction to be selfless. Women have been socialized in their roles as nurturers to put the needs of others first--a form of selflessness or self-abnegation (Mullett, 1988; Wolf, 1993). Women have had many high profile role models for self-abnegation: Mamie Eisenhower said of her life, "I have but one career and its name is Ike" (Chesler & Goodman, 1976, p. 63). Lady Bird Johnson informed the white house staff that "[for] anything that's done here, or needs to be done, remember this: my husband comes first, the girls come second, and I will be satisfied with what's left" (Chesler & Goodman, 1976, p. 63). Expectations in the 1990's remain much the same (Wolf, 1993).

Lewis-Strickland (1988) argues that while self-abnegation can be valuable, women are taught a false self-abnegation--one predicated not only on a denial of women's own rights and claims, but on a denial of their own sense of self, one which is done in a context of powerlessness. Yet in our society, for women to refuse this false self-abnegation is to be considered selfish. Women's demand for power is seen as selfish, for power is seen as asserting the self, as the usurpation of limited resources or the exploitation of others; it is not the placing of others' needs first, as is required of women.

## **The Self-Esteem Barrier**

The message underlying the idea that women's needs are less legitimate than others' is that women themselves are less legitimate, less valuable than others. Indeed, women grow up in a world that continually dehumanizes, devalues, and makes them invisible to such an extent that women internalize this view of themselves.<sup>8</sup> In such a world:

how can we be surprised that women question their worth, or that adolescent girls lose their voice and their sense of entitlement to an opinion? How could girls not doubt the validity of their own concerns? The gatekeepers of the nation's consciousness certainly do. (Wolf, 1993, p. 83)

Poor self-esteem can act as an extremely effective barrier to power for women in a number of ways. It can result in women remaining unaware of the power they do have, in women being convinced that they are undeserving of further power, and in women remaining unconvinced of their ability to wield power should they gain access to it.

To be unable to see one's power is to be unable to use that power. Wolf (1993) maintains that because of the fragility of women's self-esteem, many remain unaware of their role in the '*genderquake*'--a term she uses to characterize political events in the United States in the 1990's (e.g., women's reaction to the Thomas-Hill hearings, the mobilization of women in the elections, etc.) which demonstrate women's growing power as 51% of the American population. Certainly studies in attribution of success indicate that women are generally more likely to attribute their success to external factors, such as luck,

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<sup>8</sup>This issue shall be addressed in greater depth in a later chapter devoted to the examination of violence, in all its forms, against women.



and to attribute their failure to internal factors, such as lack of skill. Not all agree concerning the conclusion of these studies. Ayers-Nachamkin (1992) suggests that, rather than reflecting women's real attributions, this reflects verbal conformation to expectations of feminine behavior; women should be selfless and therefore self-effacing--immodesty is not ladylike! However, it should be noted that it is psychologically more comfortable to believe what you say; sometimes saying is believing. In either case, whether women are unable to see their power or simply unable to acknowledge it, the end result is the same--they are unable to use it.

To believe oneself undeserving of power is to eliminate the possibility of demanding power. While Wolf (1993) argues that women--although sometimes unaware of it--have gained more power, she still believes that there is room for considerable improvement. She contends that women must demand more for themselves. However, to do so, women must feel themselves worthy of the demand. Wolf sees self-esteem not only as confidence about oneself, but also as confidence about one's right to power. Without this confidence and without confidence about the ability to wield power, women will continue to be barred from it.

### **The Visibility Barrier**

The barriers of self-esteem, selflessness, and criticism effectively combine to create another barrier--that of visibility. Women are conditioned to fear visibly rising above others (Wolf, 1993). Because ours is a society in which women are relatively invisible and women in power are relatively rare, women are inexperienced at rising above others or

standing alone. In addition to this inexperience, women's fears of criticism and of being selfish make claiming power all the more unappealing for some.

### **The Barrier of False Powers**

While power, for the most part, has been made unappealing, undesirable, and unattainable, women have been granted one source of power--the power of body (Miles, 1985). The power of body encompasses three forms of power: motherhood, beauty, and sexuality. In whatever form, power of body has been offered to women as an appealing substitute for real power.

The power of motherhood has received much hype over the centuries. Yet genuine recognition, in both attitude and action, of the value of motherhood by individuals or by cultural institutions is still not generally forthcoming. As well, while there is no denying the powerful impact of mothers on their children and subsequently on the future of all communities, motherhood does not provide individual women with any real power for themselves. Miller and Cummins (1992) found that women's reproductive and family roles almost never actually made women feel powerful, despite their belief that it should.

The power of beauty and sexuality is as illusory as that of motherhood. Women have been raised to believe their beauty is their power, but it is a liability as much as it is an asset. In our society, beauty and intelligence in women are seen as opposite and mutually exclusive--women can be either '*brains*' or '*bimbos*', not both (Chesler & Goodman, 1976). As well, beauty is short lived, increasingly difficult to attain (the current ideal for beauty is not naturally physically possible), and not terribly marketable for the

average woman: "Women may feel like a million dollars when they look good--but they haven't got a million dollars" (Chesler & Goodman, 1976, p. 42).<sup>9</sup> While Camille Paglia (1991) maintains that "sex is power" (p. 2), ultimately:

however visible Woman as Body may be, her power must not be confused with the institutionalized power of men in a society run by men. It must not be confused with anything like genuine freedom or autonomy, the power of a woman to run her own life. If a woman's power is centered in her body, so ultimately is her powerlessness. Because in patriarchal society a woman's body does not belong to her; it is appropriated by and for men. (Greenspan, 1983, p. 166)

Thus the power of woman as body is a myth, a myth which is an effective barrier to power for women. In offering an appealing substitute, it distracts women from attempting to claim real power.

### **The Money Barrier**

In a money culture such as ours, money is synonymous with power and so the previously outlined barriers to power for women apply equally well to money. I have, however, chosen to treat money as a barrier in its own right because it is so conflict laden for women. However reluctant women are to discuss power, they are enormously more reluctant to discuss money; however much women and power is a contradiction in terms, women and money is more so. While we can redefine power so that it does not conflict with our view of femininity, we cannot redefine money.

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<sup>9</sup>The topic of women and beauty is too complex to be covered in depth here. I would refer the reader to *The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf (1991) for a more thorough review of the issue.

Although recent attention has been given to the problem caused by the feminization of poverty, most fail to see its intimate connection with the masculinization of wealth (Tavris, 1992). Money and the pursuit of money are masculine, not feminine. From their earliest experiences on, women and men are taught two very different languages about money (Wolf, 1993). For men, the pursuit of money is a virtue, for women, it is a vice (this partly explains why men have greater difficulty facing unemployment or having a smaller salary than their spouses'). Men are raised to choose careers, carefully considering earning potential. Women are not. Some men may specifically choose a nonlucrative career, but they do so after considering the consequences. My mother, being ahead of her time, raised me to believe I could have any career I chose, advising me to choose whatever interested me the most. It never occurred to either of us to consider earning potential and now, while I enjoy my career, I am sometimes frustrated with my low salary. And I am not alone, for Wolf (1993) notes that women college students overwhelmingly "opt for humanities studies that guarantee them the lowest professional salaries" (p. 243), while 80% to 90% of the students choosing the higher-paying fields (e.g., hard sciences, engineering, etc.) are men. Clearly women are still raised to work more for love than money.

One of the major difficulties women have with the pursuit of money is that it breaks the strong injunction for women to be selfless. The pursuit of money by women is seen as greedy and selfish. Women are socialized to see money as evil, or at least unfeminine. If women do use money, it should be for the well being of others, not for themselves. Wolf (1993) discussed the need for women to become comfortable with

talking about, wanting, and earning money. Yet even she felt obliged to preface this with an apology for possibly sounding "obscene" by raising the issue when the problem for so many women is genuine lack of money.

Women are also ignorant of the language of money, for its pursuit is still *'m'ladylike'*--this despite the fact that most women now work outside the home. Women tend to see a salary offer as what the job pays, while men tend to see it as an opening bid for negotiation (Wolf, 1993). Unlike men, women often undervalue themselves, frequently wondering if they deserve a raise. As well, Wolf (1993) notes that it is becoming a common practice in human resources departments to raise the initial salary of a position significantly in order to screen out female applicants. Women have little opportunity--formal or informal--to learn about money and this can be a major barrier to women: Only the powerless live in a money culture yet know nothing about money. This is not a problem for men since they grow up in a culture where the pursuit of money is masculine. On the other hand, money and sex are just supposed to happen to women; they are not expected to pursue it any more than Snow White pursued Prince Charming and the life happily ever after.

### **The Barrier of Power Illiteracy**

The combined effects of the first nine internal barriers to power for women serve to create a situation in which women have little to no access to power. With little access, women gain little experience with it and little opportunity to practice using it. Thus the final barrier to power for women is power illiteracy. This illiteracy is further exacerbated

by an almost complete lack of powerful women as role models in the media. Wolf (1993) describes this as a type of psychic deprivation which denies young women what they need, growing up in our culture, to envision themselves in new powerful roles.

## **Claiming Power**

The internal barriers standing between women and their envisioning of themselves in new powerful roles have been explored. For some women, the question remains "Should they claim power for themselves? Wolf (1993) sees power as fire of the gods. Women must learn to use it, not because they are better than men or will use it more wisely, but because they are entitled to it. Women have made considerable strides toward social equality, but much remains to be done. In the fight against sexism, as in that against racism, "it is not enough to sit at the front of the bus. We won't be able to fight [sexism] until we own the bus company" (Wolf, 1993, p. 248). No small effort has been spent to identify the problem and to convince men of the need for change, but education alone will not eradicate discrimination (e.g., the areas where men are the most educated, such as higher education and medicine, are the areas most resistant to women's entry). This is not a war against men, but against gender discrimination; however, men as a group will have to give up privileges so that women may gain their rights. Some men will, and indeed some already do, see their loss of privileges as a loss of rights and will not give them up easily. Common sense tells us that it is always harder to get someone to give up something they already have than it is to have never given it at all. Clearly no ruling class has ever given over power by choice. Women must no longer ask for power, appealing to the

opposition for justice, for it will not be given; women must take it--stealing fire from the gods.

Should women steal this fire from the gods, they would experience the positive side of power. While it must be used responsibly, it can bring many things: material goods and services (e.g., economic independence, health, education, opportunity, etc) as well as psychological benefits (e.g., self-respect, self-confidence, etc.). Power makes you feel powerful. While women's claiming of power will not automatically eliminate misogyny, with greater power and money "much of its impact will be neutralized, whether misogynists like it or not" (Wolf, 1993, p. 249). With power, women gain the ultimate ability to define themselves. By claiming power, women will "claim not only their rights but their own souls" (Miles, 1985, p. 231).

The question that remains for women is no longer "Should women claim power for themselves?", but rather "How can they do so?" Given the array of internal barriers to power for women, the question is indeed a challenging one. It is also one of personal importance for me and I had hoped to find an easy answer to it in Wolf's book (1993) *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century*. Yet while Wolf spent a good deal of time analyzing women's false fears of power and the great benefits to be had in claiming power, she spent considerably less time discussing how women might overcome their internal barriers. Perhaps therein lies the answer--there is no easy answer. It is to be found only as each woman critically examines the internal barriers to power and rejects the underlying patriarchal assumptions about what women are and should be; the answer is to be found only as each woman sees the need to claim power for

herself and the advantages to be had from power. In so doing, women will come to see that power and money are enabling, not polluting or masculinizing; they will come to see that women can integrate the two sides of the masculinity/femininity coin; they will come to see that women can abandon the patriarchal injunctions requiring niceness and selflessness; they will come to see that their own needs are as legitimate as those of others and that power can be and should be used responsibly. If enough women of my generation succeed in kicking over some of these internal barriers, perhaps young girls growing up today will indeed have an image of strong, powerful women somewhere realistically between Snow White and the wicked stepmother.

Having thus explored the issue of power for women in general terms, the chapter which follows shall examine power more specifically in terms of women's intimate relationships with men. It should be noted that in this dissertation, I purposefully exclude an examination of women's intimate relationships with women. This is not because I intend to deny or devalue their existence. Rather, it is because I believe that these two types of relationships can be distinctly different in nature. This should not be surprising given that women and men, growing up in patriarchy, have such vastly different experiences. While power is inevitably a part of all relationships, woman-woman relationships do not have the same male-female power differential inherent in heterosexual relationships in a patriarchal culture. Added to this difference is the oppression of homophobia possibly experienced by those in a woman-woman relationship. Ultimately the clinical component of this dissertation involves feminist music therapy case studies with women recovering from the



harms of relationships with abusive men. Subsequently, it is power within women's intimate relationships with men which shall be the focus of the chapter which follows.

## **5. Isn't It Romantic?**

### **Power in Women's Intimate Relationships with Men**

While a focus on power has been relatively absent in women's experiences, a focus on love has not. Our favorite love songs and romantic movies, which speak to us at great lengths and in great numbers about love, do not speak to us of power. The question of power is an uncomfortable one, and when a man and a woman seek intimacy within a relationship, they speak of feelings and love, not of resource exchange and power. Indeed, for many, power and love are a contradiction in terms (Lips, 1991). Yet while we are reluctant to speak of power, it is an inevitable and influential aspect of all intimate relationships. "Power resides in family and sexual relationships, from the giving and withholding of kisses or money to dish washing or domestic violence" (Levine, 1992, p. 20). To refuse to speak of power is not to eliminate its place in intimacy, but rather to eliminate chances for change.

In this chapter, I shall explore this issue of power in women's intimate relationships with men. Attention will be focused on the powerful cultural messages given to both women and men about romance and love, as well as the more covert messages about power. The balance of power between women and men will be examined in the areas of money, work, childcare, housework, leisure, and sexuality. The specific

manner of the use of power (i.e., power strategies) by women and men will also be explored. Finally, a comparison will be made of power within traditional relationships, violent relationships, and egalitarian relationships. Regardless of the type of relationship in which they may end up, women long for romantic, intimate relationships, if the numbers of women marrying and the popularity of such '*women's films*' as *Sleepless in Seattle* are any indication. While neither movies nor songs portray power as romantic, romance and intimate relationships do involve power. Ultimately, this chapter will explore what women are socialized to long for in terms of intimate relationships with men, and the reality of power in the relationships which they get.

## **Women's Intimate Relationships with Men**

In entering into intimate relationships with men, women form what is still considered to be the basic unit of society--the couple or the family (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Steinem, 1992). While an increasing number of women and men marry at a later age, the majority of women and men still marry and still hope their relationship will be a permanent one. "For the fact remains: the mother-father family is still normative in Western culture and profoundly so" (Levine, 1992, p. 197). Yet, while the choice to marry may be an individual one, marriage and the family themselves are institutions which establish certain standards and practices, proscribe specific roles and rules of conduct, and are extremely resistant to change (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). It has been the contention of feminism that the family does not exist in a vacuum, but within a

patriarchal culture and, as such, it both reflects and perpetuates patriarchal ideologies, including sexism and even misogyny (Gornick & Moran, 1971; Levine, 1992; Steinem, 1992). "The family is both a psychological place and a social institution, a microcosm of a larger world, fundamental to and dependent on a vast and complex patriarchal structure. Neither can change without the other" (Levine, 1992, p. 20). In our patriarchal culture, despite some changes, women continue to have considerably less power than men (Levine, 1992; Lips, 1991; Tavis, 1992). In our current gender system, gender itself is hierarchical and men are valued while women are devalued (Levine, 1992). Similarly, in intimate relationships with men, women generally have less power and are devalued (Gerber, 1991; Lips, 1991; Tavis, 1992). This greater power which patriarchal norms give men in heterosexual relationships--the private sphere--is augmented by the greater power men have in the public sphere.

That this male-female power differential, despite certain gains for women (Wolf, 1993), remains deeply entrenched is in no small measure due to its uniqueness as a power system; no other system of inequality is like it (Hester, 1992; Lips, 1991). Women are not only subordinate to men, but also live in intimate relationships with them. "Masculinity and femininity may stand on either side of a mile high wall, yet women and men share beds and homes, histories, and children" (Levine, 1992, p. 27). In our culture, powerlessness and power are not only facts of life, but are built into the very identities of women and men respectively. Indeed, power is entwined around our most intimate sexual moments with the eroticization of the inequality and subordination of women. Not only are inequality and subordination of women accepted, but the cultural media (books,

movies, music, etc.) portray them as synonymous with the erotic. The family is not only where this power play takes place, it is also where we first learn about this power system—from women as well as from men, from our mothers and our fathers, and from their interactions (Lips, 1991). Given this, the resistance to change of the male-female power system is not surprising.

In this section, focus has been on the general issue of male-female power differentials in the family and in patriarchal culture as a whole, as well as on the interplay of these two systems. In our current culture, women and men tend to form intimate relationships for reasons of love. Subsequently, the next section shall examine the strong cultural messages women and men receive about love and romance and the implications these have for the balance of power.

## **Love and Romance**

Cultural messages about the importance and the nature of love and romance are strong and pervasive. Song lyrics, talk shows, bestsellers, movies, and advice columns all proclaim the importance of love. Women still grow up awaiting or anticipating marriage, although it is no longer considered by most to be their sole '*raison d'être*'. The feelings of one young woman are not so different from those of other women: "Like in the romance novels...I'm hoping some day I will fall in love with a man and we will be happy and live happily ever after" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 151). Despite recent attention to their supposed commitment phobia, men too continue to look forward to marriage (Chesler &

Goodman, 1976; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Yet while the cultural messages about love are pervasive, they do not reveal the true nature of love or of intimate relationships; instead they provide a romanticized version. The trouble with this romantic love is that "it blinds women to the less charming realities of life with the Prince" (Tavris, 1992, p. 285). It conceals the power differential which exists between individual women and men in intimate relationships and which exists between women and men as groups with differing power in our culture (Lips, 1991). The underlying message of romantic love is to not only stand by your man, but to also stand a little behind him (Chesler & Goodman, 1976).

Tavris (1992) maintains that the true nature of love and intimate relationships is also concealed by a recent trend, seen in our cultural messages, towards the feminization of love. This feminization of love involves the designation of women as experts in the area of love. It does so through the glorification of '*women's ways of loving*' (i.e., talking about feelings). Tavris contends that men too have ways of loving (i.e., doing things for others), but that these different ways, which are neither better nor worse, are not currently valued or acknowledged. While this view of women as essentially more nurturing than men is embraced by feminists and nonfeminists alike, it is really simply a new twist on a very old idea: It allows women to excel in the one area always allotted them--the private sphere, the intimate world of love. While it is appealing to hear women being valued, and while it is appealing to move from being different and worse than men to different but better than men, the feminization of love is ultimately a myth and one which poses considerable danger for women.

The feminization of love is a myth in that it embraces a view of women as essentially different (and better) than men, denying the complexity and diversity among women as it does among men. I would agree with Tavis (1992) that women and men respond in a variety of different ways, in a variety of different situations, with a variety of different people, at various stages of their lives. Masculine and feminine approaches are neither opposites nor mutually exclusive. To maintain that all women in all situations, at all times are more nurturing than all men is simplistic, reductionistic, and false.

The feminization of love is not only a myth, but a dangerous one. While at first sight, one would think that to be designated as the expert (in any field) would be advantageous, in reality it is not. The feminization of love allows women to be experts in an area presently devalued in our patriarchal culture, providing a poor substitute for real power: "Women's alleged superiority in love is a sop given to women in a system that regards love and care as fluffy topics to begin with, suitable for women's magazines, greeting cards, and sermons" (Tavis, 1992, p. 249). The feminization of love also serves to further support the traditional division of the private sphere from the public sphere. It encourages women to openly express their needs for attachment, to over-focus on relationship, to take full responsibility for the entire family's emotional well being, and to repress their needs for achievement and independence. On the other hand, it encourages men to repress their needs for attachment, to under-focus on relationships, to ignore any responsibility for the family's emotional well being, and to over-focus on achievement and independence. In their intimate relationships, the feminization of love creates a double bind for both women and men. Both are socialized to be attracted to a stereotype

(rather than a real view) of each other. Women learn to be attracted to the strong, silent, and independent man, and men to the beautiful, nurturing, talkative, and dependent woman. Yet these very stereotypes are the most frequent cause of complaint for the other sex once the "honeymoon period is over" (Tavris, 1992). In encouraging women to be more emotionally committed to a relationship than men, the feminization of love places women at further risk, for research has shown that whichever partner is less committed or '*loves less*', that partner will have greater power and take a greater role in decision making (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Lips, 1991).

Just as cultural messages encourage the feminization of love, they also encourage the masculinization of silence. It is important to note that while women get credit as love experts for their capacity to talk about feelings, one should not overlook the power of men's silence. It can control others and it generally elicits pursuit from the other, which itself elicits further silence. In the words of psychologist Andrew Christensen, "Male silence reflects male power" (Tavris, 1992, p. 273), for the one with power has no need to speak. Tannen (1990) further argues that men are silent only in the private sphere, where issues are considered to be less important; men are not silent in the public sphere. Ultimately, the feminization of love and the masculinization of silence serve to "deflect our attention from the more threatening matters of inequality and powerlessness. In many families, the feminization of love is the ideology; the masculinization of power is the practice" (Tavris, 1992, p. 271).

The feminization of love is not, however, the only message women receive in our culture; in preparation for their role as love expert, women also receive extensive training



in selflessness (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Chesler & Goodman, 1976; Laidlaw, 1990; Lewis-Strickling, 1988; Mullet, 1988; Pauly-Morgan, 1988; Steinem, 1992; Tavis, 1992). Love is romanticized and idealized as requiring women to serve others, to place others' feelings, needs, and desires before--and indeed instead of--theirs. In this dichotomous view of love, if women do so, they are seen as loving and thus confirm their womanhood through selflessness; if they fail to do so, they are seen as selfish, unloving, and therefore somehow unwomanly. Lemkau and Landau (1986) see this selflessness as a psychological syndrome, defining it as a "cluster of affective and behavioral symptoms [seen in women who follow] cultural prescriptions to seek self-satisfaction via self-denial and fulfilling the needs of others to the exclusion of their own" (p. 227). While they acknowledge its cultural roots, I would recommend caution in labeling selflessness as a 'syndrome' for fear of pathologizing women and subsequently of seeking only personal solutions rather than some combination of personal and social solutions.

Lewis-Strickling (1988) sees this selflessness as a form of false self-abnegation. She argues that true self-abnegation can be valuable and should be sought after, for it is indeed necessary in a genuine relationship of love and care. True self-abnegation requires mutuality, the ability of both people involved to enter into the other's '*world view*'. The false self-abnegation currently required of women is of a different type altogether. Women are asked and expected to be loving and self-sacrificing, without any expectations--on their part or on men's part--of return; they are to be physically and emotionally nurturing to both their husbands and their children while denying their own sense of self. While women come to believe that they should be nice and are responsible

for the emotional well being of others, they have not come to see themselves as deserving of equal treatment from others. "In this sense, they saw selflessness as a virtue and any claims of their own to equal rights as selfish (Lewis-Strickling, 1988, p. 196).

Brown and Gilligan (1992) take this one step further, arguing that women are not only encouraged to be self-sacrificing, but also to be self-silencing. They contend that girls, entering adolescence, reach a '*relational impasse*'. At this point, girls' early socialization to seek out authentic relationships (ones in which they can express themselves freely and in which connectedness is central) comes into direct conflict with the stronger proscription for women to be nice, to refrain from hurting others, particularly in intimate relationships with men. Yet such relationships would be fraudulent ones and thus women are put in a double bind--to seek out authentic relationships or fraudulent ones; to speak what they know about relationships or to silence that and accept the social construction of relationships for women in a male-voiced culture. The girls Brown and Gilligan (1992) interviewed, in order to overcome their relational impasse, chose to accept the fraudulent relationships; they chose to be self-sacrificing and self-silencing.

What is the cost of this relational impasse, this false self-abnegation, this '*caring trap*'? Brown and Gilligan believe that the inherent paradox of the relational impasse results in loss of voice--a transformation from strong, free-speaking girls to silenced women. With their voices muted, women come to doubt their feelings, their experiences, and even themselves. With the tyranny of proscribed niceness, their lives have become circumscribed by a '*wall of shoulds*' and their relationships characterized by their silence, selflessness, need for approval, fear of conflict, and ultimately by powerlessness.

Similarly, selflessness and self-abnegation are shown to have debilitating effects on women's sense of self and well being (Chesler & Goodman, 1976; Lemkau & Landau, 1986; Lewis-Strickling, 1988; Mullett, 1988; Pauly-Morgan, 1988). "If one gives up one's desires and claims to the extent that one fails to develop one's own sense of self, the attempt at self-abnegation will lead at worst to despair, at best to enormous resentment and anger" (Lewis-Strickling, 1988, p. 197). Nor does this affect only women--although that alone would be strong and sufficient reason to demand change. The long-term effect of resentment can be the creation of an enemy out of one's own intimate partner, as is frequently seen in traditional relationships (Lewis-Strickling, 1988). Nor is this enmity entirely one-sided, for "there is a difference between feeling that one has an ally and that one has an uncritical fan; an ally is a source of strength, but a fan is a responsibility" (Lewis-Strickling, 1988, p. 194) and sometimes that responsibility can seem overwhelming. Thus while women's requirement to be selfless offers many advantages to men, it is not entirely advantageous to men or women. However, because of its nature, the demand for selflessness from women ensures their complicity in maintaining the status quo (Chesler & Goodman, 1976). It encourages women to see any '*self-regarding act*' as a selfish betrayal of their intimate partner (Pauly-Morgan, 1988). It also encourages women to look for internal solutions to their problems and it exhorts them to remain in their relationships, regardless of the situation--even should violence be a part of that relationship.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This issue will be discussed in greater depth later in this dissertation.

Clearly, the messages of the feminization of love, of the selflessness and self-abnegation required of women in love, and of the relational impasse these create for women do not allow them a balance between self and other; nor do they allow women to choose to simply give, rather than to give in. These messages can combine to form a strong internal barrier to power for women in their intimate relationships with men. This internal barrier is fortified by the external barrier of women's lesser access to power in a patriarchal culture.

In this section of the chapter, I have looked at some general issues of power in women's intimate relationships with men, including the strong cultural messages to both women and men about the meaning of love and intimacy. In the next section, I shall explore power in more specific areas common to most women's intimate relationships with men--those of money, work, childcare, housework, leisure, and sexuality.

## **Domains of Power**

Power and power imbalances can express themselves in many different ways in women's intimate relationships with men, although financial power comes most readily to mind for most (Levine, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). "Childcare, housework, and money are the currencies of influence, value, and respect in a couple [sic]. Hoarding or distributing these coins can be a way of communicating love or withholding it" (Levine, 1992, p. 386). Despite the belief by some in its desirability, and indeed in its present actuality, an all-around power balance between men and women in intimate

relationships is currently extremely rare (Levine, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

In this section, the hopes for and realities of power shall be looked at in the areas of money, work, childcare, housework, leisure, and sexuality.

### **Power and Money**

Despite many cherished beliefs about love, romance, and even of fairness, money plays a significant role in determining relative power in intimate heterosexual relationships. "While the romantic in us might argue that money should not create significant problems in committed relationships, the scientist in us must argue to the contrary" (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983, p. 51). Money brings power, particularly the power to make decisions, Yet money is an even more taboo subject among couples than sex (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Blumstein and Schwartz maintain that this is because it simply isn't romantic. I would add that it is also because, as discussed in Chapter 4, money and power are both taboo topics for most women. In the past, women were neither to have nor to want money or power, and so there was no need to discuss them. While women now have some money and some power, they are still uncomfortable either wanting them or discussing them. As well, although women have made some gains, they still have generally less access to power or money than men. Women have gained greater equality in their intimate relationships with men, but this has been hindered by their lower salaries. "Whether he's clever or dull, charming or boorish, a man is likely to make more money than a woman, to have a bigger office, and to have better access to the boss' car (Levine, 1992, p. 337). This lack of access to equal money for women has a direct and

significant impact in the balance of power within their intimate relationships with men. As women's economic dependence decreases, her autonomy, power, and expectations--personal and sexual--increase. As her economic dependence increases, her control and input in the relationship decrease. "Whether a battered woman who fears murder or starvation if she leaves her husband or a low-paid academic whose mortgage payments, haircuts, and children's summer camp bills come out of her husband's corporate salary, a woman feels men's financial power deeply" (Levine, 1992, p. 11).

While access to money is extremely important in male-female power balances in intimate relationships, so too are attitudes towards money. From an early age on, men are socialized to see money as power, as their identity as providers, and indeed as a measure of their masculinity. Women tend to see money as autonomy and security, but not as part of their feminine identity; indeed it contradicts the traditional view of femininity (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Subsequently, relinquishing control over finances is not an easy matter for men--few really successfully do it, even in relationships where the woman earns more (Levine, 1992). Men are neither used to yielding power to women, nor to having a spouse with a greater income. Nor are women accustomed to it and subsequently, for women, demanding control of finances or equal power is not easy either. It may seem a trivial matter, but I believe it to be symbolic: Even in the most professed egalitarian relationship, when a couple gets into a car, it is almost invariably the man who drives. While in general women may have recently gained more power, they are more comfortable relinquishing it and less comfortable claiming it; the opposite is true for men. While men and women have made some progress, it is still difficult for men to

give up previously-held privileges. In the past when men were the sole family providers, they learned to abdicate responsibility for the family and the housework, they learned to make decisions without consultation, and they learned to have their personal and work needs shape the family's life (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). While circumstances are changing--with men no longer sole providers, it would appear that attitudes are slower in changing. "Men are starting to give up the costs of being male, but they are moving much more slowly in giving up benefits that were their due in an earlier age" (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983, p. 326).

### **Power and Work**

While work is closely interconnected with money, it is not entirely so. The past two decades have seen an enormous increase of women and mothers who work outside the home (Levine, 1992). Yet this has not been accompanied by a comparable increase in the number of economically-independent women. The past two decades have also seen a significant change in attitudes about working women and working mothers (more than half of all mothers work outside the home). Not only has it become acceptable for women to work outside the home, women who choose not to are now at risk of being considered lazy or unambitious (Coward, 1992). This attitude concerning working women has not, however, been accompanied by a change in attitude about women's rights to earn salaries comparable to men. Given this difference in the areas of money and work, the issue of power and work will be dealt separately in this section.

Women's work outside the home has considerable impact on the power balance in women's intimate relationships with men. It can provide women with greater power, greater input in decisions, greater respect and status, and greater self-fulfillment (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Lips, 1991). In our culture, work for money is seen as 'real' work, while, even for those who do not devalue it, work in the home is not seen as equally valuable. Women who work full time and who earn greater salaries have greater power in their relationships than those who work part time and who earn smaller salaries. Unfortunately, women still earn 72 cents for every dollar a man earns and subsequently attempts for male-female power balance in intimate relationships are still hindered.

While an increasing number of couples are dual earner relationships, both women and men continue by and large to see men as the primary bread earner. This is partly due to economic realities and partly due to the socialization process in which relationships are stressed for women (i.e., the family) and achievement is stressed for men (i.e., work). In marriages which adhere strongly to the view of men as the providers, men continue to have greater power and greater control in decision-making, and their marriages continue to have a greater orientation around the man's work--even if the woman earns more (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). Levine (1992) indicates that a decade later men still tend to be more invested in their work than women and they still have greater power. In *Our Treacherous Hearts: Why Women Let Men Get their Way*, Coward (1992) explores a recent trend of women who 'have it all' (i.e., have been extremely successful in the business world) to give it up and return to the home. Coward maintains that this is more than a result of maternal instincts; it is also a result of women's socialization, which does



not encourage women to see work as their primary identity and which can make work troublesome for women because of the conflict between their need to be effective and their need to be nice. Coward maintains that, while there are indeed genuine external barriers, women's attitudes create internal barriers which leave women disadvantaged at work and subsequently at home in their intimate relationships with men.

### **Power and Childcare**

While money and work might have more obvious implications for the balance of power, for those couples with children, negotiations over childcare are also extremely important. From who does what and how much in the division of labor to who subsequently has greater leisure time, childcare can be a source of great power struggles. The outcome of these power struggles is one of the '*barometers of marital happiness*' (Hothschild, 1989).

While women have made some inroads into the work world (at least in terms of numbers, although certainly not in terms of salary), men have not moved into the world of caring for their children with equal enthusiasm. There has been, however, some increase in men's participation with their children: Men are now expected to attend child birth classes and to be present at the birth of their children; fathers do spend more time now with their children. Unfortunately this time amounts to an average of only 7 minutes and 30 seconds per week alone with each child. As well, that time is generally spent in play and talk, not in planning, scheduling, or overseeing their child's needs (Levine, 1992). The greatest change has not been in men's actual participation in childcare, but in

their attitudes--attitudes that now stipulate that men should and do participate more. In interviews with men, 73% approved of equal sharing of childcare responsibilities, while only 15% actually indicated that they did so (Levine, 1992). Yet we continue to hear much about the new fathers who are so involved with their children. Levine (1992) argues that this idealization of the new fathers is possible because men are judged against the standard of no male involvement; subsequently even the smallest contribution appears wonderful. Unfortunately, women are compared to the ideal of self-sacrificing Motherhood. "Needless to say, many mothers, who have wiped puke since the beginning of time unsung (and continue to wipe most of it), are royally irritated by these rhapsodies to the Men Who Diaper and the Babies Who Love Them" (Levine, 1992, p. 121). It would seem that men's resistance to a genuine sharing of power and responsibility in childcare is strong; this is true even in relationships in which men and women espouse egalitarian beliefs.

Yet on the other hand, men attempting greater involvement with their children do face a certain amount of resistance themselves from others--from women as well as from men. Any father who has ever taken his children grocery shopping on his own can probably tell tales of not only receiving admiring comments, but also considerable advice, the assumption being that they could not possibly know what they were doing. "Women are angry that fathers don't take more care of their children. But it seems, the minute Dad hoists Junior into the Snuggli, Mom starts to feel the loss of her own status and power as a mother" (Levine, 1992, p. 393). Levine contends that there is some basis to this fear that men are taking women's power--for it might be their only source of

power, since men have not yet relinquished power to women in the work world. As well, women fear--and perhaps rightfully so--that they cannot measure up already to the standards of ideal motherhood, especially since it has grown from the 1950's to the 1990's to include not only the role of mother, but also the role of educator, therapist, and friend (Coward, 1992). To allow Dad to take care of the children is to neglect womanly responsibilities and to risk further criticism, the two worst criticisms facing women--that of selfishness and that of not being a good mother. Thus, while couples are happier when men do a sizable share of the childcare (Hothschild, 1989) and while couples increasingly indicate a belief that men should do so, a number of factors combine to make it extremely difficult, both on men's part and on women's part.

### **Power and Housework**

However difficult it is to get men to shoulder their share of childcare responsibilities, it is even more difficult to get them to take on housework responsibilities. However little time men spend with their children, they spend even less doing household chores. Whether they are married with children, married without children, or co-habiting, whether their wives work outside the home or not, whether they espouse egalitarian beliefs or not, men do not share equally in the housework (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Coward, 1992; Hothschild, 1989; Lips, 1991; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). For, while childcare tasks do have some pluses, household tasks are degraded, devalued, unending, and often unrewarding (Levine, 1992). This is not only a struggle over who does which mundane tasks, but also a genuine power struggle--the

symbolic staking out of territory and authority (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Levine, 1992). While men perform more household chores than they did 20 years ago, women are still responsible for 80% to 90% of these tasks (Coward, 1992). This is as true of women who work outside the home as it is of those who do not. Although women who do work outside the home spend less time per day than women who do not, they still take on four out of every five domestic responsibilities (Lips, 1991; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Similarly with co-habiting couples, women do the '*lion's share*'. As with childcare, what has changed is not the reality of men's participation, but the perception of what men do. Men are now believed, and believe themselves, to do more housework than they actually do (Coward, 1992; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).

Some of the reasons for the disparity between men's and women's share of housework are obvious--it is a job with no appeal and little reward, traditionally done by women. It would be difficult to convince anyone to take it on if someone else would do it. Men's resistance should not be surprising, and men often win disputes over housework by simple passive resistance--failing to do it or doing it so badly that the end result is the same.

Other reasons for the male-female disparity are more deeply entrenched in men's and women's gender identities. Housework has long been identified as women's work, as feminine. Some couples try to accommodate their gender ideologies and their wish for an egalitarian division of labor by assigning tasks according to individual skills. Unfortunately, men and women currently grow up in essentially different worlds with different opportunities for skills development. The majority of chores men are more

skilled to handle (from car maintenance and repair to lawn mowing) are quite different from the chores women are more skilled to handle (from washing dishes and doing laundry to feeding the children). For '*men's chores*' generally can be done infrequently and at a schedule of one's own choosing; '*women's chores*' on the other hand must be done regularly (even daily) and on demand--a car can wait until the weekend, a screaming child cannot (Levine, 1992). In addition, men's socialization and actual power in a patriarchal culture often lead them to a sense of entitlement to the personal services of women:

It seems to be a cultural given in America [and in Canada] that growing up female makes housework something women do...Conversely it seems to be a cultural given that growing up male in this country causes even liberal men to reject household tasks. (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983, p. 148)

Thus the power struggle in the area of housework is not a simple, nor yet successful, one.

### **Power and Leisure**

The effects of male-female power imbalances in the areas of money, work, childcare, and housework combine to create a power imbalance in the area of leisure. Leisure is linked to quality of life, mental health, and development, and it is increasingly seen as socially, politically, and economically important (Gagnon, 1993). Yet women's access to leisure is extremely limited. Women who work outside the home have two-thirds less leisure time than their male partners (Cater & Scott, 1977). The increased participation of women in the work force, without an accompanying increased

participation of their male partners in childcare and/or household tasks, significantly limits women's leisure time. In addition, with their training in selflessness, women tend to sacrifice their own leisure time for that of their husband and children (Gagnon, 1993). Whether working outside the home or not, whether married or co-habiting, or whether with children or childfree, women have less time for leisure than their male counterparts. Indeed men who enter into intimate relationships with women gain more time, as their partners take on the household responsibilities; men also gain more money to spend on their leisure time if their wives work outside the home. As Levine (1992) remarks, "Feminism, one may ruefully note, has been good to men" (p. 25).

### **Power and Sexuality**

For most, sex is considered to be the sovereign of powers in intimate relationships (Hester, 1992; Levine, 1992). It involves both '*power for*' (i.e., power to express and satisfy one's own sexual desires) and '*power over*' (Lips, 1992). Both men and women use power in their sexual encounters and both use sex to influence and gain powers in other areas of their lives (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Lips, 1991). Yet sexuality has traditionally been defined in our patriarchal culture quite differently for men than for women.

A longstanding myth portrays women as sexually all-powerful--woman as irresistible temptress, man as helpless victim (Lips, 1991). Yet in reality, women are not socialized to be sexually powerful. They are to be sexy, not sexual; they are to be sexually-desirable objects for men's pleasure, not to seek sexual pleasure for themselves.

Theirs is a passive power, to respond to men's initiative, if the circumstances permit it, or to say 'no': "females who are powerless in a male-dominated society are just as powerless in a male-dominated bedroom. If a man does not want to wear a condom, he won't" (Lips, 1991, p. 118). I would add that if a man does not want to accept (or even hear) a 'no', he won't.

Sexuality, as defined for men, involves them in the role of initiator, leader, and expert. The assumption is that sexual activity is of greater importance and urgency for men than for women (Lips, 1991). While this view ultimately gives men more power and control, it does have its disadvantages for men as well. Just as for women, men are restricted by these sexual norms--they must never appear uncertain or unknowledgeable. Attitudes have changed to a certain extent such that now men are not only to please themselves, but also women. Yet if they are to maintain the myth of expert, they cannot genuinely or easily seek information from their partner as to how they might pleasure her.

The most damaging aspect of the myth about men's and women's sexuality is the eroticization of male domination of women. Power, domination, and sexuality become so linked that male domination of women is not only a fact of life in a patriarchal culture, but also an integral part of many men's and women's intimate sexual lives as well. This accounts in part for the high incidence of male sexual violence against women--the eroticization of male domination of women serves to excuse and maybe even encourage it. Some feminists have also come to accept this idea of the eroticization of male dominance: Rich, in her discussion of what she terms '*compulsive heterosexuality*', argues that normal heterosexuality will always include sexual violence (Hester, 1992). I

would strongly disagree. I believe that this idea is as much a product of our patriarchal socialization as is the conflation of sexuality and dominance. I believe we can and must eliminate the double standard of sexuality, the eroticization of male domination of women, and the eroticization of male violence. We must be careful to separate male sexual violence from heterosexuality, to separate hatred of male violence and sexism from hatred of men, and to separate current myths about sexuality from future possibilities in women's and men's intimate relationships.

In this section of the chapter, I have explored the power balance between men and women in their intimate relationships in a number of different areas--money, work, childcare, housework, leisure, and sexuality. In the next section, I shall briefly explore the manner in which men and women use power--their power or influence strategies.

## **Power Strategies**

Traditional research on power in relationships has focused on who makes the decisions and what strategies each person uses to influence the other (Frieze & McHugh, 1992). These power strategies have been typically described in terms of three dimensions: indirect versus direct power strategies, personal versus concrete power strategies, and power strategies of helplessness versus those of competence (Sagrestano, 1992). Traditionally women were thought to use the '*weaker*' or negative strategies (indirect, personal, and helplessness) and men to use the '*stronger*' or positive strategies (direct, concrete, and competence). Recent literature however, has shown that women have less



access in reality and in expectation to these '*stronger*' strategies. Even should a woman have access, the use of these strategies is discouraged, for she is likely to be seen as unfeminine or pushy (Sagrestano, 1992 & 1992b). The recent literature indicates that choice of influence strategy is determined by overall relative power, rather than by either the sex of the one who uses it or by the sex or their partner. Of course, the reality is that women generally still have less power than men. Women and those with less power in a relationship opt for the more indirect and unilateral strategies (the '*weak*' strategies), while men and those with greater power use more direct and bilateral strategies (the '*strong*' strategies). Women and men with equal power use similar strategies, of which the five most popular are persuasion, reasoning, discussing, asking, and persistence (Sagrestano, 1992 & 1992b).

The use of specific strategies, as well as being associated with the balance of power, is also predictive of marital satisfaction. Couples with unbalanced power resources make greater use of influence strategies in general, and of weak/negative or indirect strategies in particular. This greater use of indirect power strategies is associated with greater marital dissatisfaction (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Frieze & McHugh, 1992). Women and couples are happiest in situations where direct positive strategies are used, although their use is not predictive of who ultimately makes the decisions.

### **Violence as a Power Strategy**

While the issue of violence within women's intimate relationships shall be discussed at considerable length later in this dissertation, the use of violence as a specific

power strategy shall be addressed here. Violence is a power strategy used by men--95% of violence within intimate relationships is perpetrated by men against women (Dekeseredy & Hinch, 1991)--and used not infrequently so--one out of four women in Canada is abused by her male partner (MacQueen, 1993; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Its use is within a context of unequal power both within the microcosm of the family structure and within the macrocosm of the social structure (Hanmer & Maynard, 1987). A clear connection has been made between women's lack of power in all patriarchal social structures and male violence against women (Goudreau, 1986; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). While the effects of this inequality and subsequent misogyny and violence against women will be explored in detail in a later chapter, in this section, attention shall be focused on the balance of power at the micro level between individual women and the men who abuse them.

In relationships in which men use violence against their intimate female partners, there is a pervasive power imbalance favoring men. These men typically have greater power in all areas: money, work, childcare, housework, sexuality, and leisure (Bowker, 1983; Frieze & McHugh, 1992). In any case, men's use of violence on even a single occasion results in a significant and permanent change in the balance of power, which becomes even more male dominated (Strauss, 1978; Frieze & McHugh, 1992). Abused women correctly perceive themselves to be less powerful (Walker, 1990). Their abusers find violence to be an effective strategy for control.

Just as cultural messages about love were shown to encourage marital power imbalance, these same cultural messages encourage male violence against women and

make escape, or even thoughts of escape, more difficult for women. Brown and Gilligan (1992) contend that women's relational impasse, as a result of the proscription for women to be nice at the expense of self, increases women's willingness to stay in relationships, even those in which they might be hurt. Clearly the cultural messages to women concerning their role as love experts further exacerbates this difficulty in leaving. As well, it encourages the blaming of women for their difficulties by holding women in general responsible for the emotional well being of relationships.

Previously it was believed that men were violent towards their partners because they had no other power in their lives and no other power strategies in their repertoire. In actuality, it has been shown that these men have greater power in all other areas in their relationships. Recent research also shows that, contrary to belief, abusive men are familiar with and use more of the various types of power strategies than nonviolent men, with the exception of the positive strategies (Frieze & McHugh, 1992).

It was previously thought that women remained in abusive relationships because they had learned helplessness. Recent power strategy research has also disproved this in finding that women in violent relationships use more influence strategies than do women in nonviolent relationships (Frieze & McHugh, 1992). These women actively seek ways to improve their situation, but these are hindered by pervasive power imbalances within the family and within societal structures.

In this chapter, I have explored the meaning that love and romance have for both women and men in our patriarchal culture and the effect these meanings have on the balance of power in their intimate relationships. Some of the effects of this balance (or

more accurately imbalance) of power on women's and men's loves have also been explored. What conclusions can be drawn about the various types of relationships-- traditional relationships, violent relationships (which of course are a specific type of traditional relationship), and egalitarian relationships?

Traditional relationships, of course, involve women and men in traditional roles (the woman provides the love and services, the man brings home the bacon) with greater power accorded to men in all areas (Levine, 1992). Violent relationships involve a similar division of labor and of power. Egalitarian relationships involve an equal balance of power negotiated between women and men in all areas, with a balance also between autonomy for each and solidarity as a couple (Lips, 1991). While the majority of both women and men now believe egalitarian relationships to be preferable, most tend to have a more traditional division of power in their relationships than women and men believe themselves to have (Levine, 1992). Yet women and men are happier in relationships with greater equality of power, their lives are more tranquil with more equal control of the money, and their sex lives are more satisfying with greater equality in taking the initiative and in refusal (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). "When women are unhappy, they usually think they need more love; but the objective evidence suggests that they need more independence" (Cancian, 1987, p. 8). While the struggle for equal power for women in their intimate relationships with men is neither easy nor near to being won yet, equality of power holds much promise for women as well as for men. To achieve this equality of power will require considerable external changes:

It is premature to rush past feminism to a "postfeminism" that, like its concurrent smile button presidencies, exhorts everybody to hold hands and pretend to be equal, instead of actually doing anything that enables them to become so. The beneficiaries of inequality are eager to forgive and forget. Forgiveness from a position of power is a kind of noblesse oblige, gentle on the giver; and the mutinies of women, the poor, or people of color--well these the powerful would be just as happy to forget. The casualties of inequality, on the other hand, have a harder time kissing and making up with injustices against them hardly redressed, they continue to feel compelled to give discredit where discredit is due. (Levine, 1992, p. 397)

If, however, external changes are not accompanied by changes in our very definitions of masculinity, femininity, and power, then equality may be impossible to achieve. This will not be easy: "Far as we have come in naming inequality, it remains almost indiscernible--the taste of our very tongues, the light behind our eyelids, the gravity that keeps our feet planted on the earth" (Levine, 1992, p. 396). Feminist therapy proposes to accomplish these internal and external changes through facilitating a feminist analysis of power and intimacy for their clients and through actively working towards social change for all. Ultimately, women and men will have to find a new and more mutually satisfying response to the question, "Isn't it romantic?".

## **6. Power and Feminist Therapy**

Having examined the feminist analysis of power, both in general terms for women and in terms of their intimate relationships with men, the next step is an exploration of power within feminist therapy itself. In this chapter, careful attention shall be given to the meaning of power for feminist therapists, their clients, and their therapeutic relationship. The chapter shall then conclude with a look at women's empowerment--one of the principle goals of feminist therapy--and its specific meaning within a feminist framework.

The issue of power in the client-therapist relationship has been one of great interest, and at times great controversy, for feminist therapists (Ballou, 1990; Bricker-Jenkins et al, 19991; Brody, 1984; Brown, 1990; Douglas, 1985; Gilbert, 1980; Greenspan, 1983; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Lerman & Rigby, 1990; Siegel & Larsen, 1990; Smith & Dutton, 1990; Sturdivant, 19809; Van den Bergh & Cooper, 1986). An egalitarian client-therapist relationship is one of the hallmarks of feminist therapy. This requirement for a balance of power in therapy is a guideline which influences the choice and use of all techniques in feminist therapy. Yet what constitutes an egalitarian relationship and how it is to be achieved has changed over time with the maturation of the feminist therapy discipline.

In the earlier years, feminist therapists maintained that the client-therapist relationship should and could be egalitarian in all aspects with absolutely no power differential (Lerman & Porter, 1990). It was assumed that power issues would not arise between women clients and women therapists, and if they did, they could be easily addressed simply through the therapist's conscious commitment to feminism and to equality. Discussion of genuine power differentials was often deflected by adoption of the feminist conceptualization of power. As discussed earlier, power from this perspective was seen as being of two types: *'power over'* (i.e. the power to influence or control others, viewed as a *'masculine'* power and to be avoided at all costs) and *'power for'* (i.e., the power over one's own life, viewed as *'feminine'* power and to be valued). I contend that this view, which still persists to a certain degree today, reflects women's discomfort with power resulting from internalization of oppression more so than it does innately masculine or feminist power styles. For ultimately, women will need both *'power over'* and *'power for'*, and therapists indeed have *'power over'* and *'power for'* in their therapeutic relationships. In devaluing and denying this one type of power, feminist therapists have simply denied the existence of power differentials inherent in all therapeutic relationships.

In recent years, feminist therapists have come to increasingly accept that power exists in all interpersonal relationships and that the eradication of all power differentials, even in feminist therapy, is impossible (Lerman & Rigby, 1990; Smith & Dutton, 1990). Instead, feminist therapists must aim for a therapeutic relationship with their clients which is as egalitarian as possible and which is at least equal in respect and value, if not in actual power (Siegel & Larsen, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Van den Bergh & Cooper, 1986).

Feminist therapists now acknowledge the inherently greater power of being a therapist, for as therapists they have greater knowledge and expertise in certain areas (that is, after all, why they are sought out by clients) and they have less need of their clients than their clients have of them. Feminist therapists, however, see this as a temporary power inequity and they strive continually towards a greater balance of power through their work with their clients within the therapeutic process and through simultaneously working for social change (Lerman & Rigby, 1990; Smith & Dutton, 1990). In so doing, they must struggle with the perpetual question "How do the stronger protect the weaker without destroying their individual sense of dignity [and power] in the process?" (Lerman & Porter, 1990, p. 11).

There is a general consensus among feminist therapists concerning the actions therapists must take to ensure the most egalitarian relationship possible. To do so, feminist therapists must: acknowledge the inherent power differential in therapy; acknowledge clients as experts of their own behavior; teach clients independence, gender-role and power analysis, and about their own power and their rights as consumers of therapy; share power by involving clients in establishing their own treatment goals, strategies, and so forth; identify their clients' strengths, including those not traditionally valued in a patriarchal culture; and facilitate their clients' own abilities to heal (Ballou, 1990; Greenspan, 1983; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Sturdivant, 1980; Van den Bergh & Cooper, 1986; Worell & Remer, 1992). Feminist therapists can also foster egalitarian relationships through emotional connection with, rather than objective distance from, their clients and through purposeful and discrete disclosure of their personal feelings, beliefs, and



experiences (Brody, 1984; Gilbert, 1980; Greenspan, 1983). Feminist therapists can also provide positive role models of the use of personal power. Finally, because male-female relationships so frequently reflect the power differential typical of patriarchy, egalitarian relationships are frequently more effectively obtained when the therapist and the client are both women. For similar reasons, some feminist therapists maintain that if clients are members of other oppressed groups (e.g., women of color, lesbians, etc.) then their therapists should belong to the same groups. However, this is not always possible given the extremely limited number and limited sociocultural backgrounds of feminist therapists.<sup>11</sup>

As there is a consensus concerning what feminist therapists should do to foster egalitarian relationships, so too is there a consensus concerning what therapists should not do. Feminist therapists should avoid: adopting the role of expert; making decisions for their clients; blaming their clients for their situation; usurping their clients' power, and subsequently reenacting societal power inequities; adopting unemotional, detached stances; and over-relying on evaluations and attributions (Greenspan, 1983; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Siegel & Larsen, 1990; Sturdivant, 1980). Furthermore, feminist therapists should avoid making use of the concepts of transference and countertransference, for the first fails to value the client's perspective, while the second effectively blames the client for the therapist's feelings (Sturdivant, 1980). By following these prescriptions of what should and should not be done, feminist therapists can succeed in fostering the most egalitarian therapeutic relationship possible.

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<sup>11</sup>This topic shall be addressed in greater depth in a later chapter.

While the establishment of an egalitarian therapeutic relationship is an important step in the journey for feminist therapists and their clients, it is women's empowerment which is the final destination. Although the goal of empowerment is not unique to feminist therapy, it is essential to it. As well, feminist therapists' view of empowerment is unique. Just as feminist therapy addresses personal and societal issues, so too does its goal of empowerment involve change at both the personal and societal levels (Burstow, 1992; Gutiérrez, 1991; Hall, 1992; Laidlaw, Malmo, & Associates, 1990; Smith & Dutton, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). For feminist therapists, empowerment is defined as a process involving an increase of power--personal, interpersonal, and political power. This process enables individuals to take action to have control over and improve their lives (Gutiérrez, 1991). Personal power involves the ability to recognize and meet one's needs. Interpersonal power refers to the ability to influence others, while political power refers to one's access to resources. For feminist therapists today, genuine empowerment involves all three of these forms of power. Until recently however, feminists have focused on personal power, seeing it as a positive form of power and an unlimited resource. While increasing personal power is indeed the first step, feminist therapists are now acknowledging the necessity of increasing interpersonal and political power as well. These forms of power are not entirely unlimited, for some men will lose some of their power and privileges as women gain some. Hall (1992) contends that empowerment extends far beyond a legally-coerced equality for women, to include increased personal and political power resulting in increased women's self-respect and life satisfaction. For Hall (1992) empowerment is defined to include "both a personal strengthening and enhancement of life chances and

collective participation in efforts to achieve equality of opportunity and equity . . . It enhances human potential at individual and social levels of expression " (p. 83).

To accomplish this goal of empowerment, feminist therapists must establish an egalitarian therapeutic relationship with individual women and then, within that relationship, make use of the array of feminist therapy techniques outlined earlier. But that alone is insufficient. Feminist therapists must also actively seek change for all women at the societal level. Anything less than that would not be feminist therapy. Feminist therapists must commit themselves both to personal change, helping individual women recover from the harms of a patriarchal culture, and societal change, ensuring that no further harm will be done.

Power has thus been examined in general terms for women, in terms of their intimate relationships with men, and in terms of their empowerment by means of feminist therapy. In the chapters which follow, a closer look shall be given to the phenomenon of male violence against women and its complex interaction with issues of power.

## **7. Male Violence Against Women**

The abuse of women by men within their intimate relationships is not a new phenomenon (Bean, 1992; Bowker, 1983; Dekeseredy & Hinch, 1991; Dickstein & Nadelson, 1989; Dobash & Dobash, 1992 & 1988). History has witnessed centuries of male violence against women, in which a man's right to abuse his wife was legally protected and socially condoned, perhaps even encouraged. In the words of Canadian Justice Bertha Wilson, "laws do not spring out of a social vacuum. The notion that a man has a right to discipline his wife is deeply rooted in the history of our society" (Doran, 1992, p. 2).

Yet, while this history of women abused by their male partners has been a long one, it has also been a silent one (Hoff, 1990). When legal, it was generally considered to be an inconsequential, but private, matter between a man and his wife--not to be discussed. As it became increasingly subject to legal sanctions, it became an even more private matter between a man and his wife--all the more not to be discussed. Indeed it was a problem which was neither recognized, nor even named.

Not until the 1970's did abuse of women by their male intimate partners become recognized as an important social problem (Bowker, 1983; Loseke, 1992; Doran, 1992; Roberts, 1984; Williams-White, 1989; Yllö & Bograd, 1988). It was only as a result of the

women's movement of the 1970's, in Britain, the United States, and eventually in Canada, that the problem was seen at all, that it was seen as a social problem, and, indeed, that it was finally named-- *wife battering*' (Bowker, 1983; Loseke, 1992).

Success in proving the existence and the extensive nature of the problem has been neither complete, nor long lasting. In the 1970's, the efforts of many were focused on substantiating the severity of the problem; yet in 1982 a report on wife battering given in the Canadian House of Commons was met with laughter and jokes on the part of the members of parliament (MacLeod, 1987). While initially dismayed by this response, MacLeod (1987), in her report for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, maintained that public rage, demands for action, and nationwide changes were all a direct result of this parliamentary display of callousness. She remarked that "the results have been impressive" (p. 3). Yet how far-reaching and long-lasting have these *'impressive results'* truly been? Almost a decade later, substantiation of the severity and the nature of the problem is still being demanded. The task of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993) has been to, once again, prove the existence of male abuse of women, and the response of the Canadian public has once again been one of shock--as if hearing of it for the very first time.

Certainly the statistics are shocking, although not, shockingly, new. The problem of woman abuse by male partners is persistent, pervasive, and extremely serious (Dobash & Dobash, 1988). In Canada one in four women is assaulted by her intimate male partner, with an average of two of these women being killed per week. Of those women assaulted by their intimate male partners, 50% are also sexually assaulted and 25% are explicitly

threatened with death. In 1992 alone, 78,429 women were admitted to 273 shelters across Canada (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Yet an average of 7 out of 10 women are turned away from these shelters because of overcrowding (Doran, 1992). Similarly, in the United States, male abuse of women partners is a serious issue, with an average of four women per day being murdered by their significant other (Bean, 1992). These figures, shocking enough on their own, are staggering when one considers that they are underestimates: Women typically underreport abuse by their male partners for reasons of genuine fear, embarrassment, shame, poor-self-esteem, acceptance of the dominant societal view of their responsibility for their own victimization, love and hope for change in their partner, and inadequate institutional response (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). The law enforcement and medical professions either underreport or report it in such a manner that traditionally its true nature (i.e., male abuse of women intimate partners) has been concealed. The underreporting on all sides is influenced by a culture whose patriarchal values are conducive to woman abuse (Dekeseredy & Hinch, 1991).

In the past, previous attempts to document the existence of male abuse of women partners have been attacked by questioning their statistical accuracy. Today, not only has the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993) provided thorough documentation, its findings have been supported by those of Statistics Canada 1993 (MacQueen, 1993). While some might try with the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, few could argue that Statistics Canada had a private axe to grind on this issue.

In the past, whenever the existence of male abuse of their women partners was conceded, it would appear that the subsequent struggle was not over whether it was acceptable, but over what degree of abuse was acceptable. For example, at first wife beating was completely and legally acceptable, then it was acceptable if the stick did not exceed the width of a man's thumb, then if it did not disturb the peace, all the while wife rape continued to be acceptable. Now the degree of acceptable violence is being limited to exclude wife rape; however, the continued assumption of acceptance of some degree of violence is illustrated in the words of Bob Wilson, a U.S. senator debating the criminalization of marital rape: "But if you can't rape your wife, who can you rape?" (Yllö, 1988, pp. 31, 32). This almost tacit understanding that a certain amount of violence against women is to be expected and to be accepted can be seen in the media where only the most sensational abuse stories get covered (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). I believe it also partly accounts for the extensive and sensational news coverage of the earlier Bobbit case in which an abused woman cut off her abusive husband's penis. There have been equally horrendous and certainly more numerous instances of male violence against women, but this case was different. Women, not men, are expected to be abused by their intimate partners. The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) also acknowledges the longstanding social acceptance of a certain degree of violence against women in making their new demand for *'zero tolerance'*.

While the demand for zero tolerance is new, the problem of woman abuse by male partners is not. It has been shown to be persistent, pervasive, and as important an issue in the 1990's as it was in the 1970's. It is important to note that, while considerable effort has

been taken to document the impact of male abuse on a significant number of women, even "one dead woman is one too many. One emotionally bruised and scared woman is one too many" (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993, p. 2). The effect of the past overfocus on incidence rates has been to deflect attention, effort, and money from the more important issues of assistance for abused women and, ultimately, of prevention of male abuse of women (MacLeod, 1987).

The focus of this chapter shall be on the challenges faced by women abused by their intimate male partners.<sup>12</sup> To best accomplish this, I shall address specific issues involved in the naming of this type of abuse, defining it, explaining it, describing it and its impact on women, and exploring internal and external solutions. Because information concerning the multiplicity of perspectives of different women's experiences (i.e., the experiences of women of color, of different social classes, etc.) is extremely important and

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<sup>12</sup>I would like to note here the rationale for my choice of topic for this dissertation --to examine the effectiveness of feminist music therapy specifically with women abused by their intimate male partners. Any group of women clients could have served equally well as participants in the clinical component of this dissertation; I have chosen abused women for four reasons: because it is of interest to me and because, as I hope to show later in this chapter, it is of great importance; because abused women represent an emergent client population for feminist therapists (Worell & Remer, 1992); and because, of all possible client populations, the importance of a feminist analysis is perhaps most evident for abused women. These reasons alone should suffice. Yet in preparing this dissertation, I was questioned by a number of people concerning my decision to look only at violence against women and my neglect of violence against men. I suggest that this is an example of what Pogrebin (1993) refers to as the '*stolen spotlight syndrome*': Whenever attention is directed towards women's experiences, it is inevitably followed by a "Me Too or What About Us? reaction on behalf of men" (p. 96). Perhaps it reflects women's and men's different experiences in patriarchy. Women have long been accustomed to being excluded (from language, historical accounts, studies, etc.); men have not.



extremely complex, it will be addressed specifically in a later chapter. This chapter will attempt to address general issues concerning woman abuse common to all women.

## **Naming It**

The naming of this particular type of violence against women, as with all other types, is an important, yet problematic, issue. A review of the research and service literature reveals a diverse number of terms used at various times--sometimes simultaneously--since the problem was first named in the 1970's (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Dutton, 1992; Gary, 1991; Loseke, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Walker, 1990a). This contentious issue is much more than one of simple linguistics; naming both reflects and determines how male violence against female intimate partners is defined and explained. Ultimately, it determines all subsequent action taken. Some names have unintentionally obscured the issues involved; others have done so intentionally. Recently, names have been chosen in specific attempts to correct this--some more successfully than others (Dutton, 1992). In this section, I shall explore some of the most widely-used terms and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The terms '*wife beating*', '*wife battering*', and '*wife abuse*' were generally used interchangeably in the first attempts of the 1970's to name the problem (Walker, 1990a). '*Battered wife*' became popularly accepted through Del Martin's attempts to counteract the gender-neutralizing effects of other terms (Walker, 1990a). As a substitute for these other terms, wife beating and wife battering do succeed in making it clear that women are on the receiving end of the abuse. They also succeed in identifying the centrality of the

social institution of the family in male violence against women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Unfortunately, they obscure some other important issues. In the first instance, these terms take women's experiences of violence out of context, obscuring the relationship between male violence against women within marriage and all other forms of male violence against women. Thus they lead to the transformation of the problem from a political one, requiring a political analysis, to a personal one, requiring individual psychiatric treatment or counseling (Walker, 1990a). A second problem with these terms lies in their exclusion of all but legally and currently married women (Kelly, 1988). Certainly statistics show that many men have not felt the need for a marriage license in order to be abusive to their intimate partners; nor has a separation or divorce decree been sufficient cause for cessation of this violence. A final problem with these terms lies in their use of such emotive and literal words as '*beating*' and '*battering*'. This can lead to an overfocus on extreme, repeated, physical violence, excluding all other forms of abuse and almost implying that some degree of physical violence (i.e., if it is not extreme or repeated) is acceptable (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Kelly, 1988; Loseke, 1992). They effectively create a hierarchy of male violence against women in which some violence is worse than other violence, and subsequently some women more deserving of sympathy and assistance than others (Loseke, 1992).

However many disadvantages there are with the use of such terms as wife beating, wife battering, and wife abuse, these are far outnumbered by those involved with the use of the terms '*domestic violence*' or '*family violence*'. Both these terms serve to effectively obscure the dimensions of gender and power (Bograd, 1988; Gary, 1991; Walker, 1990a).

In using gender-neutral terms, they obscure both men's actions and women's suffering (Walker, 1990a).<sup>13</sup> In defining the problem simply as interpersonal relationship difficulties, they deny the fact that 95% of victims are women and they deny the relationship between this violence within intimate relationships and all male violence against women (Bograd, 1988; Walker, 1990a). I suspect it is this gender-neutral view of a gendered phenomenon which is partly responsible for the acceptance and longevity of the myth that women are as violent as men in their interpersonal relations (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Knudsen & Miller, 1990; Strauss, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). The use of terms such as domestic violence and family violence also has an impact on the direction taken in searching for solutions. Instead of seeking ways to deal with structural issues of power and inequality, ways are sought to help individual women and men control their violence and to help individual couples to improve their intimate personal relationships (Walker, 1990a).

There currently exists a proliferation of other terms which similarly mask the gender and power dimensions of the issue and which encourage individual solutions. These include: spouse abuse, marital abuse, conjugal crime or violence, interpersonal violent episodes that break out between couples, and family disputes. Walker (1990a) argues that some of these terms, along with domestic and family violence, arose--at times wittingly and at other times unwittingly--with the professionalization of the issue as a result of government and social service agencies involvement. She argues that the

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<sup>13</sup>It is ironic that the inclusion of women in our male-dominated language has been such a difficult struggle, while it has been no struggle at all to include men or to use gender-neutral language when the naming of men was critical (e.g., *'dead-beat dads'*, *'wife abuse'*, and *'battered women'* were quickly replaced with *'nonsupporting parents'*, *'domestic violence'*, and *'battered spouses'*).

government redefined the issue as a problem in need of professional and legislative solutions to be addressed by various divisions of legal, welfare, mental health, and education. These solutions are aimed at helping individual women and men, while ignoring the more fundamental issue of gender inequality. The focus is on treating or punishing individual men, but leaving untouched the institution of the family and of patriarchal societal structures themselves. Certainly individual changes are far more easily accomplished and far less threatening than pervasive social changes.

Use of the terms '*wife assault*' and '*woman assault*' represents an attempt to deal with the problems of some of these terms. They do succeed in making it clear that the violence is against women and that it is a crime, not a case of an interaction gone awry. However, their use continues to overemphasize women's legal rights to physical protection only. It ignores their rights to other than physical protection and it does not involve a political analysis of women's oppression at the societal level (Walker, 1990a).

Recent attempts to solve the dilemma of naming include the use of the term '*woman abuse*' for all forms of male violence against women (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993) and the use of the phrase '*violence, abuse, and control*' of women suggested by Dutton (1992).

Clearly the task of naming is a complex one with significant ramifications for the search for explanations of and solutions to the problem. In light of this and with a hope to

keep simple, yet make clear the issues of gender, power, and context, I have chosen to use the term *'woman abuse by intimate male partners'*.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to moving on to defining and explaining woman abuse by intimate male partners, I would like to touch on one final issue involved in naming--the naming of abused women as victims as opposed to the naming of abused women as survivors. Recently, feminism has been criticized for its focus on women as victims (Wolf, 1993). This focus should not be surprising given that women have had, since the 1970's the unending task of proving that women are indeed victimized by men. Nor should the criticism of this focus on the victimization of women be surprising given that women and men both are socialized to expect women to be ladylike, to be nice and uncomplaining. However, while it is necessary to acknowledge and document the ways in which women truly are victimized, it is important not to define women solely as victims. In this chapter, I shall explore ways in which some women are victimized in their relationships with men. I shall look at the internal and external toll of such abuse on women. Change is not possible without acknowledgement of the realities of the situation, without protesting the genuine harm done to women; but change is also not possible for women who are seen and who see themselves solely in their role as victim. Therefore, I shall also look at women abused by their intimate male partners in their capacity to survive, to be empowered, and ultimately to empower themselves.

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<sup>14</sup>I am purposefully excluding the issue of female abuse of women within woman-woman relationships for I believe it is of a different nature since it does not involve male violence. As well, as noted previously, the woman-woman relationship itself can be distinctly different from a woman-man relationship within a patriarchal culture.

## Defining It

Just as there has been a number of different terms for woman abuse by intimate male partners, so too has there been a number of different definitions of it. Just as these different terms reflect and determine how this phenomenon is understood, so too do these different definitions reflect and determine the understanding of woman abuse by intimate male partners. Despite their variety, traditionally these definitions have placed a greater focus on the physical aspects of abuse, to the exclusion of psychological aspects. This is true even of the majority of very recent definitions (Bograd, 1988; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). This should not be surprising given the greater than 20-year demand to prove its very existence and to prove that its existence is abhorrent. Loseke (1992) maintains that woman abuse by intimate male partners is socially constructed as to better elicit sympathy and therefore assistance for these abused women. Unfortunately, this is more easily done through a focus on the physical harm done, on women's *'red badge of courage'*.<sup>15</sup> More recent definitions have acknowledged the existence of other than physical abuse, but have continued to focus on physical abuse for reasons of expediency--it is much easier to define and to prove--as well as for reasons of their belief that it is more serious because of its life-threatening potential.

Forms other than physical abuse do exist and can have considerable impact.

Subsequently, I have adopted a definition of woman abuse by intimate male partners which

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<sup>15</sup>Another unfortunate side effect of this social construction of abused women is that it results in such a negative definition (e.g., abused women as incompetent, less than adult, and pathological) that no woman would want to be so described. The definition itself deals a blow to any woman's self-esteem.

can accommodate all types of abuse: It is a "pattern of coercive control over women [by their intimate male partners] that uses diverse methods and leaves women questioning their self-worth and perception of reality" (Yllö & Bograd, 1988, p. ). Two key points in this definition are the issue of control and the diversity of the types of abuse. Most recent definitions of woman abuse now include the issue of control (Adams, 1988; Dutton, 1992; Gary, 1991; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Porterfield, 1992; Williams-White, 1989; Worell & Remer, 1992; Yllö & Bograd, 1988). This issue shall be addressed later in this chapter while reviewing explanatory models for woman abuse by intimate male partners. The diversity of the types of abuse shall be the focus of the section which follows.

### **Describing It: Types of Abuse**

With increased attention given to the issue of male abuse of women within intimate relationships, has come increased awareness of the horrifying variety of types of abuse. These can include: intimidation, isolation, threats, use of male privilege, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, verbal abuse, stalking, physical assault, slapping, kicking, torturing, and a variety of other controlling behaviors (Porterfield, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Marshall and Vaillancourt (1993) organize all these abusive behaviors into a small number of larger categories, of which I feel the most important categories which can effectively encompass all abusive behaviors are: physical, sexual, verbal, and psychological or emotional abuse.

## **Physical, Verbal, Sexual, and Psychological Abuse**

Marshall & Vaillancourt (1993) and the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) provide clear and concise definitions of each of these major types. Physical abuse is defined as "any physical assault, including slapping, kicking, punching, burning, choking, stabbing, shooting, etc." (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993, p. 21). Verbal abuse "entails derogatory remarks about a woman's intelligence, abilities, social skills, appearance, education, job, income, childrearing practices, or house maintenance abilities" (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993, p. 21). Sexual abuse is defined as "any form of nonconsensual sexual activity ranging from unwanted sexual touching to rape" (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 7). Finally psychological abuse has been defined as

a means of controlling women by threatening them, those close to them, or their property. It can take various forms, for example, harassment, threats of suicide, verbal attacks that humiliate or make them feel insecure, constant criticism, unfair accusations, isolation from friends, forcible participation in degrading acts. (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993, p. 21)

Most traditional definitions of psychological abuse, of the small number which exist, focus on issues of intimidation. I shall expand this definition of psychological abuse to include much more. It includes not only intimidation, but all forms of male psychological violence against women at both the interpersonal and systemic levels, as well as their impact on women's psyches (e.g., devaluation, internalization, etc.). I shall refer to this as *inner abuse* to clearly distinguish between it and the more limited, traditional view. I believe this inner abuse to be not only important in abused women's lives, but to be an essential



component of all male abuse of women. Subsequently I would modify Marshall and Vaillancourt's (1993) list of types of abuse to include: physical, verbal, sexual, and inner abuse. In the next section I shall explore the impact of inner abuse first in general terms with all women and then in specific terms with women who are abused by their intimate male partners.

### **Inner Abuse**

Inner abuse lies at the very heart of male violence against women. It is used to justify and perpetuate this control and at the same time to deny its very existence. It includes a variety of forms of psychological violence seen at both interpersonal and systemic levels, as well as their psychological impact on women: from threats and intimidation tactics to attacks on the inner self, from dehumanization, devaluation, and '*invisibilization*' to internalization. Each of these supports and maintains patriarchy.

Intimidation is the concept most frequently addressed in the relatively neglected area of inner abuse. It is the most likely of all forms of inner abuse to be included in traditional definitions. It is the least complex, in that it simply involves the use of words, threats of violence, to intimidate. The importance of even this form of inner abuse is however not always acknowledged, as it leaves no physical scar: "...and that was worse to me than getting whacked...that waiting without confrontation is just so frightening" (Kelly, 1988, p. 120). This intimidation is frequently accompanied by other forms of inner abuse: dehumanization, devaluation, '*invisibilization*', and internalization.

In *On Violence*, Hanna Arendt (1970) discusses the '*banality of evil*' in describing Adolf Eichman. This man, apparently normal in all other ways, was able to commit horrendous violence against people and to do so in a thoughtless fashion--as if they did not count, as if they were not human. Research experiments confirm this capacity of humans to be more violent towards others if they seem less real, less human (Miedzian, 1991). In one study, subjects only ceased to administer painful electric shocks when they were in the same room as their '*victim*'. In this light, violence against women as a group seems less surprising in a culture in which women are consistently and systematically dehumanized. French (1993) states that

it may seem that such violence against another human being is self-evidently wrong, but given the fact that interpersonal violence [male violence against women] is so common in our society, it is clear that the wrongness of such acts is not evident at all. (p. 3)

Perhaps it is not the wrongness of violence which is not evident, but rather the humanity of women.

In patriarchy, women are violently reduced to bodies only (i.e., objectification), neatly doing away with the spirit and thus humanity. Not only are women seen as '*body*', but as '*body-for-man*', to serve and to service (originally defined as bearing children and now as providing pleasure). They are objects of the male gaze. As such, they have been "arranged, maimed, jeopardized, and tailored for male-defined eroticism" (Burstow, 1992) as seen in the traditions of foot binding, clitorectomies, breast surgery, and self-starvation, and all with women's willing participation. Women's lack of human status was originally a legal reality, but now, despite legal changes, it continues just as strong but perhaps with

more subtlety in attitudes and beliefs that pervade all areas of women's lives. This is reflected in the words of G. H. Hatherill, Police Commissioner of London: "There are only about 20 murders a year in London and not all are serious--some are just husbands killing their wives" (Steinem, 1992, pp. 260-261).

Hand in hand with the dehumanization of women in our patriarchal culture is their devaluation. This form of inner violence convinces both men and women that women are worth less, inferior, deserving of their secondary status in society and deserving recipients of violence.

On a global level, in a world that defines value by financial worth, women comprise 50% of the world population and are responsible for two-thirds of all working hours, yet earn only one-tenth of the world income and own less than 10% of all property (Wolf, 1991). Women's traditional labor of childrearing and housekeeping is not recompensed because it is not valued and it is not valued because it is not recompensed.<sup>16</sup>

On another level, women are trained in nurturing and selflessness--the '*sweetness syndrome*' (Steinem, 1992). As outlined earlier, women are to be interested in pleasing others, to be nurturing by putting others (men and children) first; and if they do not, they are considered selfish. The underlying message is that women are worth less than these others.

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<sup>16</sup>Some might disagree with this and indeed, in our culture, many speak highly of motherhood. Yet the oft-asked questions, "Do you work or are you a housewife?" and "Are you a working mother?", might give a clearer indication of the true value accorded women's work. That these questions are asked by women and men alike speaks to the internalization by women of this devaluation.

This leads many women to believe that they are incomplete without a man (Bean, 1992). Being worth less, they can still redeem themselves through alliance with men. Only in this way can women approach adulthood and humanity. The power of the message to women of their lesser value and need for alliance with a man is summed up neatly in a poem of Iris Litt, a survivor of abuse by her male partner (Porterfield, 1992, p. 2):

Carrots in Their Pockets

My mother didn't give me much except  
the constant promise of love  
dangled in front of my nose  
and I an eager little mule  
followed it through life  
growing into a proud sensitive graceful animal  
making love to men with carrots in their pockets

Devaluation of women at its extreme appears as misogyny and misogyny is alive and well in our society (Bart, 1993). It is seen in individual relationships between men and women and it is reflected in our culture.

In describing Marc Lépine's massacre of 14 women at the École Polytechnique of the Université de Montréal, French (1993) stated, "He hated women and he hated feminists. He was a misogynist" (p. 17). Not only was he a misogynistic individual, he also reflected, in extreme form, the misogyny of our society. His actions and his words (in the form of a written *'apologia'*) permit no other interpretation.

While the attempts to deny the misogyny of Lépine's violence were partly unsuccessful, in many ways women have been successfully made invisible (Wolf, 1991).<sup>17</sup> Their experiences and their pain have been so minimalized as to be nonexistent. They have been systematically and consistently excluded from all realms of '*mankind*', including language itself.

It is not surprising that so much effort was and continues to be expended on exploring the extent of, rather than attempting to eliminate, male violence against women. It, like women, has been made invisible and so it was necessary to first make it visible--to prove it existed. As discussed earlier, once male violence against women had been named and made visible, it was quickly renamed--domestic violence, conjugal crime, and so forth--so that women's experiences were again invisible.

It is common for men abusing women to vehemently proclaim that the women enjoyed the experience. Many even insist that the women, at threat of further violence, state that this is so. In an episode of '*Donahue*', men making '*cat calls*' were confronted by these women and told quite bluntly that they did not enjoy it or find it flattering and that indeed it made them fearful. Even then these men continued to insist that the women enjoyed it. These are not cases of mistaken beliefs. They are situations in which women's experiences are devalued, discounted, and denied. Women have been made invisible.

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<sup>17</sup>For those unfamiliar with the details of the Montréal massacre, much of the media coverage downplayed the fact that all the victims were women. I was living in the United States at the time and heard only of a horrible massacre of people. This was not much different than the initial media reports from Montréal of '*15 morts*'. Only later was Lépine's intention to kill women because they were women made known and even then only some saw this as misogyny. A more detailed account of the event and the reactions to it may be found in Malette & Chalough's *The Montréal Massacre* (1991).

This making invisible of women is not just something which supports violence against women. It is violence itself and it is inner violence of a devastating nature. It not only demeans, but also negates women's entire existence.

It is one thing when men and male structures dehumanize, devalue, and make women invisible. It is quite another when women come to believe it themselves. This is the most powerful form of inner violence--internalization. Smart and Smart (1978), in discussing rape, state that "it is not the rape itself which constitutes a form of social control, but the internalization by women of the possibility of rape" (p. 100). I would say that it is not the internalization of the possibility of rape, but the more insidious internalization of the dehumanization, devaluation, and invisibilization of women by women. According to Dworkin (1976):

. . . the first fact of our oppression is that we are invisible to our oppressors. The second fact of our oppression is that we have been trained--for centuries and from infancy on--to see through their eyes so we are invisible to ourselves. The third fact of our oppression is that our oppressors are not only male heads of state, male capitalists, male militarists--but also our fathers, sons, husbands, brothers, and lovers. No other people is so entirely captured, so entirely conquered, so destitute of identity and culture, so absolutely slandered as a group, so demeaned and humiliated as a function of daily life. (p. 70)

This internalization does violence to women's core self-esteem.<sup>18</sup> In two thorough reviews of the literature, Steinem (1992) and Wolf (1991) outline the devastating effects

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<sup>18</sup>I shall use here the definition of self-esteem accepted by Steinem (1992) in her review of the 1990 California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility: "Appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly towards others" (p. 26).

of this inner violence. Through internalization, women have learned to replace the *'male gaze'* with their own *'self-critical gaze'* (Wolf, 1991).

Women's view of their minds is very negative. Neither poor women nor powerful, well-educated women see themselves as smart: "It was as if the female spirit were a garden that has grown beneath the shadows of barriers [of overt discrimination] so long that it kept growing in the same pattern, even after the barriers were gone" (Steinem, 1992, p. 3). Steinem describes how women's experiences from birth onward devalue their minds. Sadly this includes educational institutions. While girls and women are getting good grades in academics, they are getting even better grades in self-degradation. A survey conducted by the American Association of University Women in 1991 showed that despite earning better grades than boys, girls had worse self-esteem: By high school the percentage of girls with good self-esteem had dropped from 67% to 29%, compared to a drop for the boys from 60% to 46%. The situation at university is even more bleak (Steinem, 1992). This is not surprising given society's definition, and women's internalization, of women as body.

Reduced to body, women have learned through the beauty industry, however, that even their body is not *'up to snuff'*. The beauty industry reinforces the patriarchal view that women's identity is premised upon their physical beauty; it then proceeds to provide women with images of a physical ideal which is increasingly impossible to attain (Wolf, 1991). Given this, it is not surprising that one third of women surveyed in the United States were "strongly dissatisfied with their bodies" (Wolf, 1991). Women perceived their bodies as worse than they actually were while men perceived their own bodies as better. In

other words, no matter how they looked, men were okay and women were not (Steinem, 1992). They had internalized misogyny.

French (1993) discusses the power of violence to batter the core identity or personhood. It is the violence to the inner core which makes possible the other forms of male violence against women. It is the internalization of misogyny, dehumanization, devaluation, and invisibilization by both women and men that encourages the acceptance of violence, failure to see it as abuse, and the blaming of women and the self-blame by women for it.

It is important to make absolutely clear that I am in no way pathologizing women. I am attempting to increase awareness of a powerful violence directed in varying degrees towards the core of each woman in our culture. Women are struggling against this inner violence with courage and varying degrees of success. It is only in naming it however that we can begin to see it in all situations and to overcome it. For "only by examining our wounds and giving them a name can we heal them" (Porterfield, 1992, p. xiv). "The power of naming is twofold, naming defines the quality and the value of that which is named--and it denies reality and value to that which is never named, never uttered" (DuBois, 1983, p. 108).

### **Inner Abuse & Women Abused By Their Intimate Male Partners**

The inner abuse committed by men who abuse their female partners is an integral part of the abuse, just as it is in all male violence against women. Their intent is to devalue, denigrate, and demean in order to justify the abuse to themselves and to others



(Adams, 1988). Burstow (1992) outlines some of the many direct techniques commonly employed by these men to do so: calling their partners stupid, ugly, incompetent or by degrading names, comparing them unfavorably to other women, blaming them for their own abuse, threatening abandonment or physical violence, depriving them economically, and isolating them from all sources of support.

At the same time as this direct attack, men who abuse their intimate female partners proceed to minimize or deny the extent of the psychological and physical damage they inflict (Ptacek, 1988). They often succeed in making the experiences of these women invisible to those around them and even to the women themselves. As well, they contribute to the women's devaluation by emphasizing the priority of their rights over women's--male entitlement--as part of the natural order of things (Ptacek, 1988).

Despite emphasis in the literature on the physical aspects of violence, abused women themselves attest to the powerful impact of this inner violence. Most find it devastating (Burstow, 1992), considerably worse than their physical abuse (Hoff, 1990), and more enduring in nature. For some, the emotional pain continues long after the relationship has ended (Porterfield, 1992).

The impact of the individual abuser's inner violence against women is aggravated by the demands of traditional gender roles of a patriarchal culture (Hoff, 1988). Women, wives in particular, are to be nurturers, to subordinate their needs and interests to those of others, and to be primarily responsible for making the marriage work--for better or for worse (Bean, 1992; Porterfield, 1992). Regardless of the state of the relationship, the underlying message to women is to stay. As one abused woman put it, she was "struggling

to heal the man whose broken soul bled battery acid" (Porterfield, 1992, p. 201).

Ironically, the most commonly asked question of abused women is "Why do you stay?".

The abuser's individual violence against women, aggravated for the victim by society's messages, results in the final form of inner violence--internalization. The abused woman may come to believe both her partner's and society's evaluation of the situation and of herself. She may come to minimize it (Burstow, 1992). She may come to accept it: "I thought I should put up with it . . . accept my lot as being part of marriage [sic]" (Dobash & Dobash, 1992, p. 4). She may come to doubt its and her existence: "You begin to feel you don't exist. . . if you existed and you screamed someone would help you" (Bart, 1993, p. 238). She may blame herself for it--50% of abused women do (Villeneuve, 1993). Ultimately she may internalize the misogyny and suffer loss of self-esteem (Bean, 1992; Hoff, 1990; Steinem, 1992). Five years after leaving an abusive partner, women reported that their single greatest struggle was that for self-esteem and self-acceptance (Hoff, 1990).<sup>19</sup>

### **Systemic Abuse**

A final type of abuse must be added to the list of types of abuses--systemic abuse. It is increasingly recognized that male abuse of their female intimate partners does not exist in a vacuum, that its existence is denied yet tolerated and even encouraged by our societal institutions, which in their turn perpetuate abuse of women (Bart & Morain, 1993;

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<sup>19</sup>It is important to stress here again that these characteristics are not the cause of abuse, but rather the consequences of severe and repeated abuse, in all its forms.

Burstow, 1992; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Johnson, 1985b; Kurtz & Spark, 1988; MacLeod, 1987; Maidment, 1985; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Morgan, 1985; Pagelow, 1992). This can be seen in the inadequate and often times even harmful response of the law enforcement, legal, medical, mental health and services delivery professions. All reveal the same or similar attitudes which serve to trivialize and legitimize male abuse of women in all its forms (Johnson, 1985). Morgan (1985) contends that state/government intervention contributes to women's victimization in successfully depoliticizing the issue. Through a process of bureaucratization, professionalization, and individualization, it constructs the problem as one requiring piecemeal solutions from individual government sectors and for individual women and men, therefore deflecting efforts away from analysis and change of gender inequality in the patriarchal societal structures. Marshall & Vaillancourt (1993) criticize institutional response to male abuse of women for its patronizing, paternalistic, and sexist attitudes. These result not only in a failure to meet these women's needs, but also in an exacerbation of the problem by failing to believe them and by blaming them for their own victimization. They effectively make it even more difficult for women to leave abusive relationships and then blame them when they do not.

Specific criticisms of the law enforcement and legal systems indicate that, despite some recent improvements, both fail to provide women with justice or safety on all fronts—from police departments and arrest policies to courts, parole courts, and legislation (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). While some legal remedies exist, they are ineffective because of the attitudes held by those who interpret and apply them (Bart & Morain, 1993; Dobash & Dobash, 1988; Maidment,

1985). Police have traditionally trivialized woman abuse, holding women partly to blame and showing reluctance to intervene or make an arrest (Burstow, 1992; Pagelow, 1992). While arrest rates have recently increased somewhat, they have not been accompanied by increased prosecution rates or increased numbers of guilty sentences. When granted, restraining orders are enforced infrequently and ineffectively (Pagelow, 1992). From the lower level of police officer to that of judge, the predominant response has been to trivialize the women and their experience--to fail to act, to follow up, to charge, to convict, or to enforce (Burstow, 1992). In one chilling case, representative of the experiences of many abused women, the judge admonished a woman requesting a prevention order to "act as an adult". She was later found in a garbage dump--shot, stabbed, strangled, and discarded by her husband (Pagelow, 1992).

Specific criticisms of the medical system indicate that it is similarly inadequate in responding to women abused by their male partners. Physicians medicalize the problem by failing to identify abuse and by, instead, limiting their attention to physical treatment (Bart & Morain, 1993; Kurtz & Stark, 1988; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Pagelow, 1992). Subsequently medical response, with its focus on the prescription of drugs to eliminate women's problems, is inappropriate (Pagelow, 1992). Many physicians blame women for the abuse and especially for what is seen as women's refusal to leave, resulting in disdain and even in punitive referrals (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Pagelow, 1992). As well, traditional medical training, with its emphasis on objective detachment, serves to encourage objectification of women and reproduction of male-female power differentials. This can be seen in both the doctor-patient relationship and the doctor-nurse relationship

(Bart, 1993; Kurtz & Stark, 1988; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Ultimately, the medical system exacerbates the problem with its focus on the importance of family unity above all else (Pagelow, 1992).

The response of the mental health and services community has not always been much better. While appearing more benign, it has often consisted of pathologizing and devaluing women through its focus on identification of characteristics that lead women to choose and to stay with abusive partners (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Hoff, 1990; Knudsen & Miller, 1991):

I remember being so physically and emotionally ill that I couldn't eat. Too weak to sit up I lay on my psychiatrist's couch, telling him how ashamed I was that I couldn't balance a checkbook and how disgusted my husband was with me because of it. He didn't tell me that my physical state was the result of high doses of medication he had prescribed. Instead he lit his pipe and asked, "Twenty years ago when your brother was born, how did you feel about his penis?" (Porterfield, 1992, p. 165)

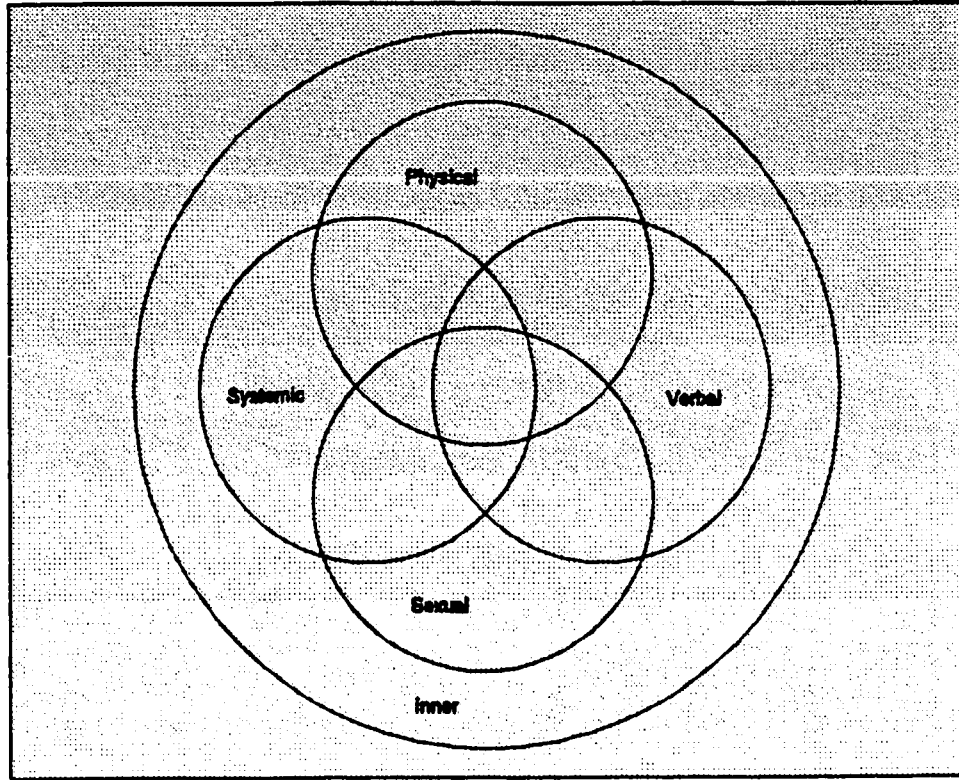
The majority of the mental health services do not share a feminist analysis of male violence; instead, they focus on behaviors and symptoms while ignoring the root cause of these (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Like the medical and legal systems, they also tend to blame the victim, although in the slightly more sophisticated form of diagnostic labels (Morgan, 1985; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Some have placed primacy on the family well being (to the neglect of that of the woman), with a focus on reconciliation and a failure to hold the man responsible for his violence (Johnson, 1985b). Some have redefined the problem as a childcare issue, resulting in the subordination of women's welfare to that

of the children. In many child abuse cases, the mother is found to be abused as well. Yet in the recent past, social work investigations often resulted in the loss of child custody for the mother because of her failure to protect her child (Johnson, 1985b). Women's shelters reflect a transformation from political organizations to more apolitical, service-oriented organizations, further pathologizing women. It should not be surprising then that two out of three abused women fail to find the mental health or social services systems useful (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

Thus inadequate response on the part of the mental health and social services professions combines with that of the medical and law enforcement/legal professions to create pervasive systemic abuse. This systemic abuse combines with physical, sexual, verbal, and inner abuse to create the full picture of male abuse of women within their intimate relationships.

Traditionally, these various forms of male abuse of their women partners have been discussed in hierarchical terms, as though some were more serious than others (with physical abuse typically being seen as the worst). I believe, however, that to rank one form over another is false, that inner and verbal abuse create deep wounds although they leave no physical trace. Rather than conceptualizing the various forms as points along a hierarchical continuum, they are best conceptualized as a number of intersecting circles, with inner abuse at the heart of them all (see Figure 1). This not only helps to eliminate the false hierarchies, it also illustrates clearly the fact that men who abuse their female intimate partners generally do so in a variety of ways--using some combination of physical, sexual,

verbal, and inner abuse--and that this abuse is encouraged, condoned, justified, and at the same time denied by the presence of widespread, pervasive inner abuse.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Male Violence Against Women.**

## **Explaining It**

What is the explanation for male abuse, in all its forms, of women within intimate relationships? Just as there is a wide variety of names for this phenomenon, there is an equally wide variety of explanations. Indeed, the controversy surrounding these explanations is partly responsible for the multiplicity of names. In this section, the eight most prominent explanations shall be explored: the medical model, the mutual combat

model, the battered woman syndrome, the family centered model, the social psychology model, the feminist model, and its two variations--the post-traumatic stress syndrome and the Stockholm syndrome.

### **The Medical Model**

The medical model views male abuse of intimate female partners as a result of individual psychopathology. Thus these abusive men are seen as an aberrant few who are unable to control themselves because of their mental illness. Within this framework, attention is directed towards personality attributes, traumatic past experiences, and current life stressors which might result in mental illness for these men (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1988; Worell & Remer, 1992). The personality attributes of abusive men suggested by this theory include: passivity-dependence, poor impulse control, low self-esteem, excessive jealousy, and inexpressiveness (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; LaRouche, 1987; Worell & Remer, 1992). In discussing the influence of traumatic past events, this theory proposes that a '*cradle of violence*' exists by which violent behavior is transmitted from one generation to the next; abused children will grow up to be abusers. Finally, the life stressors suggested by this theory as being responsible for the abuse include: the man's lack of power in the outside world, excessive stress, and abuse of alcohol or drugs (Bograd, 1988; LaRouche, 1987).

While receiving much popular support, this theory has, however, received little support from research findings; indeed, it has received considerable criticism from a number of sources on a number of grounds (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1988;



Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; LaRouche, 1987; Worell & Remer, 1992). On the first count, the incidence of psychopathology has been found to be no greater among men who abuse their female partners than it is among the general population of men. Gondolf and Fisher (1988) conclude that "the pursuit of a unitary batterer profile is in vain" (p. 74). As well, the widespread nature of this problem refutes the notion that it is simply a matter of the aberrant behavior of a few men out of control (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Furthermore, that these men are able to control their violent behavior under all circumstances except with their intimate female partners refutes the notion of poor impulse control (Bograd, 1988). This theory fails to explain why '*crazed*' men who abuse women carefully choose only women as their victims. Finally, research proves the cradle of violence to be no more than a myth: The vast majority of men who abuse their intimate partners were not abused as children; nor do the vast majority of those men who were abused as children go on to later abuse their wives (Stark & Flitcraft, 1985; Pagelow, 1992).

This theory is criticized, however, not only for its lack of support from research, but also for the negative impact it has had on the lives of abused women. It not only excuses men for their violent behavior in labeling them as '*sick*', it also serves to blame women--shortly after it was first proposed, this theory was expanded to include the labeling of abused women as pathological. Subsequently, abused women are perceived as having a number of personality attributes which lead them to tolerate, contribute to, participate in, or even enjoy the abuse. These personality attributes include: masochism, low ego strength, shyness, inability to express anger, denial and compliance, eagerness to

please, self-destructiveness, poor or internal locus of control, perception of abuse as inherent in all male-female relationships, and the capacity to be violence prone (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1988; Yllö & Bograd, 1988).

This part of the medical model reflects the misogyny of patriarchal tradition more than it reflects actual innate differences of women who are abused. Until recently, many of these personality attributes were considered to be the commonly accepted attributes of all women, not just abused women (Dobash & Dobash, 1988; Yllö & Bograd, 1988). As well, this theory of personality attributes fails to differentiate between those attributes which produce violence and those which are produced by systematic and severe abuse in all its forms. Furthermore, this theory fails to address the reality of genuine power differentials which exist between women and men in patriarchy (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

### **The Mutual Combat Model**

Woman abuse by their male partners is seen in a completely different light with the theory of mutual combat. According to this theory, battered husbands exist in as great a number as battered women, with individual men and women being equally violent towards each other within their intimate relationships (Strauss, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).

The major criticism of this theory lies in its reliance on the Conflict Tactics Scale. While still in use in the 1990's, this scale has been widely criticized in almost every area (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Pagelow, 1992; Saunders, 1988; Worell & Remer, 1992). It has been found wanting for its neglect of the context in which women use violence (almost always in self-defense in response to abuse); for its underestimation of the frequency of

violence against women and its overestimation of the frequency of violence against men through the documentation of single instances of violence only; for its neglect of the outcome of this violence (women account for 94% to 98% of all injuries and their injuries are three times more severe than those of men); and for its omission of many of the common forms of male abuse of women partners (e.g., sexual assault, genital mutilation, smothering, burning, and violence or threats of violence to women's property, pets, and children, etc.). Additionally, the Conflict Tactics Scale excludes all women who are not legally and currently married. Yet women are hurt within relationships not governed by marriage licenses and women are also more likely to be hurt or killed upon leaving an abusive relationship--whether that be by their legal husband or their boyfriend. The end result of the use of the Conflict Tactics Scale is to greatly distort the picture of the violence between men and women. In reality, 95% to 98% of the time it is women who are abused by their intimate partners. The rare instance of the use of extreme violence by women against men is quite different: Men kill after a long history of abusing women; women do so after a long history of being abused (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Thus the mutual combat theory is shown to be false and the *'battered husband syndrome'* nothing more than a myth: "A marriage license is a hitting license BUT FOR MEN ONLY" (Dobash & Dobash, 1992, p. 266).

### **Family-Centered Model**

Like the mutual combat theory, the family-centered theory maintains that violence between men and women can be a two-way street (Davis & Hagen, 1992; Knudsen &

Miller, 1990). While it does not necessarily rely on the results of the Conflict Tactics Scale, this theory does conceptualize woman abuse by their intimate male partners as just one of a subset of types of *family violence*. This family violence is defined as

any act or threatened act of violence...which a) results or threatens to result in physical injury and b) is committed by a person against another individual (including an elderly person) to whom such a person is or was related by blood or marriage or otherwise legally related or with whom such a person is or was legally residing (Davis & Hagen, 1992, pp. 16-17).

Thus woman abuse by male partners is seen as being related to child abuse (by both men and women), elder abuse (similarly by both men and women), and dysfunctional families. This theory maintains that a faulty learning environment is the source of the problem in its failure to provide a model of nonviolent conflict resolution. Both the abused and the abuser participate in the interpersonal conflict, and both must learn to resolve conflicts in a less violent manner. Thus, while acknowledging women as more victimized by the violence, this theory holds women equally responsible as men for the violence (Kurtz, 1993).

It is this holding women equally responsible for the violence which lies at the heart of the criticisms of this family-centered theory. This theory is, in essence, simply another more sophisticated version of victim blaming. It masks the gendered nature of the phenomenon, while setting up false relationships between it and other forms of family violence, and while ignoring the relationship between it and other forms of male violence against women (Davis & Hagen, 1992; Kurtz, 1993). In practical terms, the application of this theory results in a therapeutic approach based on the belief that women and men

should change to eliminate violent conflicts, but that women alone can change, if the man is unwilling. The focus on this therapeutic approach is on keeping the family together at the cost of encouraging women to stay in abusive relationships. It is ironic that, given this focus, hand in hand with the patriarchal view that women are responsible for the emotional well being of the family, many continue to ask later with apparent incomprehension, "Why do you stay?".

### **Battered Woman Syndrome**

Woman abuse within intimate relationships is seen from a quite different perspective with the battered woman syndrome of Lenore Walker (1989 & 1984). While used in the 1990's as a legal defense for abused women who kill their abusers, it started as the diagnostic label for a psychological syndrome. As such, it describes the learned helplessness which develops as a result of a cycle of violence experienced by women in abusive relationships. According to Walker, this cycle of violence involves three phases. The first phase, referred to as the Tension Building Phase, is a period in which, despite building tension, the woman is able to influence the man's violence by meeting his demands. During the second phase, referred to as the Acute Battering Incident Phase, the woman is no longer able to control or prevent the violence. This is followed by the third phase, the Loving Contrition Phase, during which the abuser is repentant, or at least refrains from violent behavior. This cycle repeats and with each repetition the three phases become shorter in duration and the violence becomes more severe. Walker describes the learned helplessness which is a consequence of experiencing this cycle of violence as the

generalization of feelings of helplessness to stop the beatings to feelings of helplessness regarding all aspects of life. Walker maintains that as a result women are psychologically unable to leave abusive relationships--they have developed an ability to deal with the violence, using such techniques as minimization, denial, and dissociation to enhance their survival within the relationship, rather than risk attempting to leave (Walker, 1989).

While appearing more sympathetic to abused women, the battered woman syndrome has been the subject of some criticism (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Hoff, 1990; Doran, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). The main contention with this perspective is that it pathologizes abused women--another sophisticated form of victim blaming: blame the woman and then excuse her for her '*sickness*'. As well, both learned helplessness and the cycle of violence have been criticized for their failure to accurately describe the experience of all abused women. Not all experience the three phases of the cycle of violence in the same order or in the same manner, and all three phases, regardless of the presence or absence of physical violence, involve control and domination by the man. More importantly, in reality abused women do not exhibit helplessness. Rather, recent research has found that they actively seek help at all times, although help is not often forthcoming, as discussed in the previous section concerning systemic abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Hoff, 1990; Doran, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). While the battered woman syndrome is proving helpful as a legal defense for some abused women who kill their abusers, it only exonerates them by reason of insanity. Abused women might be better served by expanding the legal definition of self-defense to include more than the male experience of one man defending himself

against another equally-matched man in the heat of the moment. Abused women should be acknowledged as actively seeking help and as being very much sane: "If you are in a Nazi camp and seize the opportunity to kill your captor, is that a syndrome? Is saving your own life when you think nobody else is going to help you a syndrome?" (Doran, 1992, p. 9).

### **Social Psychology Model**

The social psychology model views woman abuse by male intimate partners as an individual problem within a social context. The abuse is supported by cultural norms and social values such that some men learn to be more violent and some women learn to be helpless. These social factors involve not only sexual inequality, but also such issues as class, money, unemployment, and social isolation.. Ultimately, woman abuse is seen as a problem of and for both sexes, involving a breakdown of family functioning and social order (Bograd, 1988; Dutton, 1988; Walker, 1990; Worell & Remere, 1992).

While this theory represents an improvement over some of the other theories in its inclusion of the social context, it still has several shortcomings (Bograd, 1988; Dutton, 1988; Walker, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). A major shortcoming lies in its gender-neutral nature. In defining the problem as one of a breakdown of family functioning, it neglects the reality that it is overwhelmingly a problem of male violence against women. While acknowledging the role of socially structured sexual inequality, it fails to acknowledge the primacy of the role, seeing it rather as merely one of many different types of social structural factors. It effectively depoliticizes the issue, calling for individual

changes whereby both women and men must learn through therapy to interact in a nonviolent manner.

### **Feminist Model**

In contrast to the social psychology model, the feminist model views woman abuse within intimate relationships not as an individual problem, but as a societal one, not as a breakdown of family functioning or of social order, but as a logical result of patriarchal family and society (Bart & Morain, 1993; Dutton, 1992; Edwards, 1987; French, 1993; Gary, 1991; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Smart & Smart, 1978; Walker 1990a; Worell & Remer, 1992). At the heart of woman abuse by male partners is the issue of control. It is not some psychopathological men out of control, but the control of all women through the use of violence by some men. For, while it is individual men who use violence to control individual women, it succeeds in controlling all women. This control is so socially sanctioned, and has been for so long, that it is rarely seen as such by either men or women, abuser or abused (Bean, 1992; Bograd, 1988; Cannon & Sparks, 1989; Davis & Hagen, 1992; Dobash & Dobash, 1992 & 1988; Hall, 1992; Hanmer & Maynard, 1987b; Kurtz, 1993; Ptacek, 1988; Smart & Smart, 1978 & 1978b; Worell & Remer, 1992). Thus the feminist model acknowledges the gendered nature of the phenomenon, seeing it as deeply rooted in male domination and female powerlessness in a patriarchal culture which not only perpetuates this violence, but is in turn perpetuated by it. An important distinction made by the feminist model is that woman abuse by male partners is related to all types of male violence against women (e.g., rape, incest, sexual harassment, etc.), each one being a



manifestation of male control of women and each one condoned and encouraged by patriarchy. Male violence against women, in all its forms is thus seen as the

manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and which have prevented women's full advancement. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared to men. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 6)

With its identification of the connection between all forms of male violence against women and of the underlying social control, the feminist model redefines the problem as a social one requiring social solutions as much as, if not more than, individual solutions.

It is the feminist model which informs the practice of feminist therapy and which, subsequently, I shall accept. Some feminist therapists have, however, recently proposed two variations on the feminist model: the post-traumatic stress syndrome and the Stockholm syndrome. While evolving out of the feminist model, these two differ from it in significant ways and so need to be examined separately.

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome**

Post-traumatic stress syndrome or disorder is defined as: "a normal, albeit traumatic, reaction when an individual has experienced a severe stressor, typically considered to be outside the range of usual human experience . . . that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone including abuse characteristic of battering relationships" (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, pp. 250-251). Dutton (1992) outlines the characteristic symptoms as including: symptoms of intrusion (e.g., affective reexperiencing

of the trauma through mental images, dreams, etc.), symptoms of avoidance (e.g., denial, suppression of affective response, emotional numbness, etc.), and autonomic arousal (e.g., anger, hostility, anxiety, difficulties with sleep or concentration, etc.).

While the use of the post-traumatic stress disorder to describe the response of women in abusive relationships does acknowledge the role of the social context, it has some shortcomings. Its view (however enlightened by the feminist model) of abused women as psychopathological increases the risk of seeking individual solutions, to the neglect of societal solutions. This could be avoided if great care is taken and if the individual solutions are sought within the framework of feminist therapy which requires therapists to simultaneously seek social solutions. Another shortcoming, not so easily addressed, is the limitation of its criteria which exclude a number of less severe symptoms which are typically seen with abused women. These excluded symptoms include: shame, self-blame, subjugation (i.e., devaluation, dehumanization, internalization, etc.), morbid hatred, paradoxical gratitude (i.e., positive feelings toward the abuser), defilement, sexual inhibition, resignation, systemic abuse, and '*socioeconomic status downward drift*' (Dutton, 1992). Through the exclusion of these symptoms, some, but not all, abused women will be diagnosed, resulting in unequal treatment and perhaps even misdiagnosis. A final shortcoming of the post-traumatic stress syndrome lies in the differences between abuse within intimate relationships and other traumas typically associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. For women abused by their intimate partners: the trauma is often still occurring while help is being sought; the trauma involves many instances of abuse

over extended periods of time; and the trauma occurs within an intimate relationship with someone chosen by the woman and with whom she has shared positive experiences.

### **The Stockholm Syndrome**

Like the battered woman syndrome, the Stockholm syndrome appears to attempt to understand why women remain in abusive relationships. The Stockholm syndrome is defined as a psychological state of '*entrapment*' which results from the combined effects of abuse by an intimate partner and sex-role messages of a patriarchal culture (Graham, Rawlings, & Rimini, 1988; Worell & Remer, 1992):

We use the term "entrapment" to point out that the psychological outcomes of repeated abuse and the lack of resources for escape convince her that she is unable to leave her abuser. In addition, the strategies she uses in her desperate attempt at survival and safety are the same ones that reinforce the batterer and further reduce her personal power. (Worell & Remer, 1992, p. 240)

While this syndrome, like the post-traumatic stress disorder, identifies the importance of contextual conditions, it too has several shortcomings. The situation for women within intimate relationships is not entirely similar to that of hostages. Abused women receive considerably more abuse and over longer periods of time, and abused women generally receive less sympathy than hostages (Graham, Rawlings, & Rimini, 1988). In focusing on a '*psychological state of entrapment*' of abused women, this theory ignores their active attempts to seek help and the social realities of systemic abuse which means help is rarely forthcoming. Rather than being psychologically unable to leave, I would argue, and the murder of abused women who have left would attest to the fact, that

women cannot leave. The ultimate problem with the Stockholm syndrome lies in its pathologization of women. Not only does it blame women for staying in abusive relationships, it also blames them for exacerbating the man's abusive behavior.

While the post-traumatic stress disorder and the Stockholm syndrome might have some appeal in providing a psychiatric diagnostic label and therefore greater access to services and financial support, their shortcomings are too significant to ignore. Subsequently, it is the feminist explanatory model of male abuse of women within intimate relationships which I shall adopt for the purposes of this dissertation.

In this chapter so far, a wide variety of explanations for male abuse of women within intimate relationships has been examined. It has been shown that with the proposal of each new explanatory model has come a flurry of new names for the phenomenon. A comparative evaluation has been made of both the names and the explanatory models, with the ultimate decision made to accept the feminist model and the name of *'male abuse of women within intimate relationships'*. This abuse has been shown to take a variety of forms (e.g., physical, verbal, sexual, systemic, and inner abuse) and the interconnection of these forms has been conceptualized as a number of intersecting circles such that no one form is ranked below another and no one woman's experience devalued. In the next section of this chapter, the combined effect on women of all forms of abuse by men within intimate relationships shall be explored.

## Experiencing It

Just as male abuse of women within intimate relationships is complex and takes many forms, so too is the response of women to this abuse complex and in many forms.

While the focus has traditionally been on physical aspects, much more is involved.

The scope of woman abuse in intimate relationships is profound . . . [it] takes a tremendous physical, emotional, and psychological toll on a woman. Some recover through counseling and supportive intervention in their lives. Some do not. Some women die a violent death at the hands of their partner. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 35)

Despite the traditional focus on documenting the horrors of the physical effects, abused women themselves adamantly maintain that it is the emotional effects which are ultimately more deeply felt and more long lasting (Porterfield, 1992). With this in mind, the focus of this section of the chapter shall be on the other-than-physical effects on women of abuse by their intimate male partners. Abused women's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses shall be explored in terms of strategies developed to escape, avoid, or survive the abuse, in terms of the psychological effects of the abuse, and in terms of the interaction between psychological effects and the coping strategies (Dutton, 1992). It is important to stress that women's responses shall be examined in the context of violence, abuse, and control by their intimate male partners within a culture which condones such actions. This examination will be used to describe women's response to the abuse, not to explain the abuse or to hold women in any way responsible for the abuse, for choosing an abusive partner, or for '*choosing*' to stay.

In discussing women's response to abuse, it is also important to note that each woman's experience and subsequently each woman's response is different. In addition to the severity and types of abuse experienced, Dutton (1992) identifies a number of other mediating factors: the presence or absence of systemic abuse; personal strengths or inner resources; tangible resources and social support; historical, learned, and medical factors; additional life stressors; and the existence of positive aspects in the intimate relationship. To these mediating factors can be added experiences of such oppressions as racism, classism, ageism, and ableism.

The presence or absence of systemic abuse can have a significant impact on abused women's response. Its presence, as previously discussed, can cause considerable harm. If, on the other hand, the response of some or all of the legal, medical, and mental health systems is positive, it can facilitate recovery. While presence or absence of personal strengths or inner resources are absolutely not the cause of abuse, they certainly can have a mediating influence on women's response. Dutton (1992) identifies a variety of helpful inner resources including: self-confidence, effective life skills (e.g., time management skills, parental skills, interpersonal skills, occupational skills, etc.), belief in the right to live a violence-free life, and perseverance. These inner resources are, however, undermined by inner male violence on the part of the abuser and of societal structures as a whole.

Different women can have very different access to tangible resources and social support, and this can play a major role in women's different responses in abusive relationships. Education, occupational, and socioeconomic factors can determine the degree of financial and emotional dependence or independence. So too can something as

simple as the number and age of children. Social support can be crucial and perhaps this is why social isolation is such a commonly-used tactic of abusive men. However, social support can be undermined by others too. Family members can do so in their attempts to support the man and deny the reality of the abuse. Battered women's shelters can provide alternative support, but they are notoriously underfunded, understaffed, and insufficient in number for the demand. While placing an emphasis on tangible resources, it is essential to remember that they are not the sole factor; care must be taken, subsequently, not to deny or minimize the experiences of abused women from better socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

In identifying historical, learned, or medical factors as being influential, Dutton (1992) is referring to past experiences of violence or sexual abuse as well as rigid sex-role socialization. While these do not cause the violence or cause women to be in violent situations, they do put them at greater risk in an abusive situation. Clearly any additional life stressors simply serve to exacerbate the situation. These can include anything, from parenting difficulties to job stress or debts.

A final and extremely powerful mediating factor is found in the positive aspects of women's intimate relationships with their abusers. These can exacerbate or reduce the effects, they can cause difficulties because of the great contrast between positive and negative aspects of the relationship. These positive aspects can include such things as periods of caring and intimacy, financial security, and children's experiences.

Given this variety of different mediating factors, different women respond to their own individual abusive experiences differently, making use of different strategies to

escape, avoid, or survive the violence. These strategies can include legal strategies, formal and informal help-seeking strategies, escape behavior, separation or divorce, hiding, compliance with the abuser's requests, passive or active self-defenses, minimizing or denying the severity and the effect of the abuse, and attempting to forget the abuse (Bowker, 1983; Dutton, 1992; Kelly, 1988). In comparing help-seeking strategies, Bowker (1983) found that 55% of abused women turned to relatives, 52% to friends, 43% to social services, 42% to therapists, and 39% to clergy. She noted that those women who blame themselves for the abuse are more likely to turn to therapists. No one single coping strategy has been proven to be more effective, and abused women generally use a number of different strategies.

Abused women's use of coping strategies influences and is in turn influenced itself by the psychological effect of the abuse. Dutton (1992) discussed these psychological effects in terms of three major categories: changes in cognition, indicators of psychological distress, and disturbances of relations with individuals other than the abuser. These three categories incorporate a variety of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, interpersonal, and physical responses which are influenced, as previously discussed, by a range of mediating factors.

In discussing changes in cognition, Dutton (1992) identifies a number of changes in abused women's core beliefs which can significantly alter their lives. These can include: loss of assumption of safety as a result of abuse within the most intimate of relationships, loss of a view of the world as meaningful, increased sense of powerlessness, increased tolerance for abuse and for cognitive inconsistency (i.e., the contradictions between abuse



and love within an intimate relationship), and increased negative self-beliefs. These negative self-beliefs can include poor self-esteem, loss of trust for the abused woman in her own perceptions and judgment, and a sense of guilt and shame. While the majority of abused women do not blame themselves for the abuse, some do, and others blame themselves for not being able to stop it, for not leaving, or for not leaving soon enough. This is often aggravated by the blaming of abused women for these things by family, friends, and members of the legal, medical, and mental health professions.

The second category of abused women's responses, indicators of psychological distress or dysfunction, includes a wide variety of possible reactions: fear, intrusion or avoidance symptoms, anxiety and stress, sleep and concentration difficulties, hypersuspiciousness grounded in reality, physiological reactivity (i.e., reexperiencing of physical and affective responses to the abuse), shame, low self-esteem, morbid hatred of the abuser, somatic complaints (as well as those from injuries suffered), rage which is sometimes misdirected to someone other than the abuser or which is not expressed, grief, addictive or compulsive behavior as coping strategies (these can include self-mutilation and eating disorders, as well as drug or alcohol abuse), depression, and suicidal thought (Bean, 1992; Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992; Hoff, 1990; Nadelson & Sauzier, 1989). Abused women may or may not experience any or all of these symptoms of psychological distress. For those who do, the particular combination and the severity is very individual.

The third and final category of abused women's response involves disturbances in relationships with persons other than the abuser.<sup>20</sup> This can include difficulty with trust or intimacy within new intimate relationships. Again, not all abused women will experience this category of response, nor, if they do, to the same degree.

Regardless of the particularities of the response, each woman in an abusive intimate relationship faces a situation which has the potential to take a considerable physical, emotional, and psychological toll. Each woman should have the right of access to whatever support she deems necessary to facilitate the healing process, to move her from victimization, past survival, to empowerment.

In this section of the chapter, the effects on women of abuse by their intimate male partners have been examined. Rather than explaining this abuse, these psychological effects are a result of it. The examination of these effects, then, has been used to describe and understand women's cognitive, behavioral, emotional, interpersonal, and physical responses to such abuse. A number of factors have been shown to influence these responses as well as abused women's use of coping strategies. While effects of abuse on women have thus been shown to be very individual, the potential physical, emotional, and psychological toll of this abuse has been shown to be great.

Given the potential harm of abuse, the extensive nature of this violence, and the pervasiveness in our patriarchal culture of all forms of male violence in women's lives,

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<sup>20</sup>In her description of this category, Dutton (1992) includes traumatic bonding as a disturbance in relationship with the abuser. This concept has been discussed previously as regards the Stockholm syndrome. It was dismissed for its pathologization of women and so I do not include it here.

what can be done? There is no single solution and we cannot afford to be caught up in a debate on the merits of one over another. It will require short-term and long-term changes; it will require changes at individual, ideological, and systemic levels (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).<sup>21</sup>

Certainly as many suggest, criminal sanctions are an important part of any change. Without other accompanying changes, however, it would be like rearranging the chairs on the Titanic. Without changes in attitudes of every woman and man in the criminal justice system from the lowest level to the highest, any changes to laws will be on paper, but not in spirit.

Likewise real support and money need to be given to women seeking to protect themselves and their children from male violence, but that alone is not enough either: "A shelter could be built on every corner in every community, but until there is a significant change in social behaviour, the violence will continue and women will [continue to] be killed..." (Doran, 1992, p. 50).

Successfully decreasing male *physical* violence could also improve the situation, but it too would be insufficient on its own. Recent research (Dobash & Dobash, 1992) has shown that when physical violence against women is reduced--in this case as a result of

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<sup>21</sup>I would like to add here that I purposefully decline to discuss ways in which men might benefit from the elimination of the oppression of women and of violence against women. This would simply be an extension of the patriarchal tradition of defining women in their capacity to serve men. Seeking to find ways that men are victimized would only serve to take the focus off women and to deny the fact that many men benefit greatly from the oppression of women. I do believe that despite this, men can choose on moral and ethical grounds to reject the oppression of women and to work with them towards its elimination for *women's* sake.

counseling provided for abusive husbands--the inner abuse continues. If, as Miedzian (1991) suggests, efforts are directed towards teaching men not to be physically violent, the problem would still remain; the inner violence against women would continue because men would not have been taught not to devalue or hate women.

Ultimately, what is necessary is a complete rejection of the patriarchal belief system by women and men alike, at both the individual and systemic level. I am sometimes discouraged at the enormity of the task, especially when I see little girls and boys growing up in so called '*enlightened environments*' already at the age of 4 or 5 with strong beliefs about what girls and boys are, and what girls and boys can and cannot do. It will indeed be a slow process, but it is a task we cannot afford to postpone any longer.

In the meantime, all women must work together towards inner healing. While we refuse to allow ourselves to be defined as pathological, we have been the focus of much inner violence and that can cause wounds. We must "define our self-esteem as political" (Wolf, 1991). We must work towards its rediscovery and in so doing we must unlearn the lessons of a lifetime in patriarchy. We must work with those who have not yet learned their own worth and we will look to men as allies in revaluing women. We will look toward a time when male violence against women is a thing of the past as in the words of Lynn Leone, poet and survivor of partner abuse (Porterfield, 1992, p. 116):

#### The Past

Ain't no man gonna take away  
My heart and soul  
And whip me with it

Until that time, for as long as woman abuse is not entirely eliminated, there will be a need for support of individual change for women in overcoming the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of this abuse. Some women will accomplish this with the assistance of friends and family; others will turn to more formal sources. Feminist therapy, with its focus on both internal and external changes, offers much promise of support for women abused by their intimate male partners, and so it shall be the focus of the chapter which follows.

## **8. Feminist Therapy To Empower Abused Women**

For a number of reasons, women abused by their intimate male partners are increasingly being recognized as an emergent client population for feminist therapy (Worell & Remer, 1992). Some of these reasons have been alluded to previously in this dissertation. In the 1990's, a persistently high number of women continues to be abused. As well, more of these women are seeking assistance as a result of decreasing public acceptance of such abuse. Yet there has been an increasing awareness of the failure of traditional therapies to provide these women with the assistance they need (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). Feminist therapy appears to promise what traditional therapies have failed to provide. Certainly the time is ripe--although most women's shelters and services in Canada are not based on a feminist philosophy of treatment, there is an increasing acceptance of a feminist analysis of the problem of male violence against women (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). As well, the original feminist belief in a solely external, political solution to the problem of male violence against women has now been tempered with the realization of the concomitant need for internal solutions in helping women recover from the effects of violence (Laidlaw & Malmo, 1990).

In this chapter, the small but growing practice of feminist therapy with women abused by their intimate male partners shall be explored. The literature specific to this

practice shall be examined to identify commonalities in terms of goals, therapist competencies, and techniques (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; Brousseau-Gingras, 1989; Burstow, 1992; Corbeil, Paquet-Deehy, Lazure, & Legault, 1983; Dutton, 1992; Gagnon, 1984; Goudreault, 1986; Laidlaw, Malmo, & Associates, 1990; LaRouche, Melanson, & Montpetit, 1983; Lazure, 1983; Nadelson & Sauzier, 1989; Walker, 1990; Williams-White, 1989; Worell & Remer, 1992).

## **Goals of Feminist Therapy with Abused Women**

Just as there is a strong consensus among feminist therapists concerning the goals for women in general, so too is there a strong consensus concerning specific therapeutic goals for abused women. Many of these goals are common to those general feminist therapy goals, while a smaller number address specific needs of women in abusive relationships. Each of these goals stems from the underlying feminist political model of male abuse of women within intimate relationships as a socially-condoned means of control (Dutton, 1992).

The first goal involves issues of protection and safety for abused women (Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992). These issues are crucial, since many abused women seek therapeutic assistance while still involved in an abusive relationship. As well, those women seeking assistance from a women's shelter, while no longer in an abusive relationship, may choose to return to their partner at some time. Subsequently specific attention needs to be focused on escape plans and protection strategies for these women. Another area of safety concern is the contemplation by some abused women of suicide; this too will need to be addressed.

One of the most important, and frequently cited, goals in feminist therapy is the empowerment of abused women (Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992; MacLeod, 1987; Walker, 1990). Dutton (1992) speaks of empowerment in terms of enabling abused women to gain control over their lives and subsequently to make choices. These choices are facilitated by the feminist therapist, with the final decision being made by the client and honored by the therapist--even if that choice is to remain in an abusive relationship. Burstow (1992) speaks of empowerment of abused women in terms of their increased independence, while Walker (1990) speaks of empowerment in terms of the strengthening of personal resources.

A goal for abused women, unique to feminist therapy, is to increase their understanding of societal factors which contribute to violence against women and its impact. This involves an examination of the oppression of women, of male-female power differentials, and of men's and women's gender-role socialization (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992; LaRouche et al, 1983). The purpose of this examination is to enable abused women to understand their own experience of violence in light of the social context of control.

Closely related to this is the goal of increasing understanding of the psychological effect on women of male violence, of male-female power differentials, and of gender-role socialization (Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992). This includes the resulting internalization of oppression and misogyny by many women, which is intensified by abusive intimate relationships.



To be effective, these goals of increased understanding of the social context of violence and of its psychological effect, must go hand in hand with another goal--that of breaking the isolation typical for women in abusive relationships (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; Gary, 1991). This enables them to see abuse as a problem common to many women and not as their own individual problem or failure. This is especially important since isolation is a technique commonly used by abusive male partners to gain further control.

Another goal in feminist therapy is to nurture abused women and to validate them and their experiences, providing nonjudgmental acceptance (Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992; Walker, 1989). In accomplishing previous goals of increased understanding of the social context, feminist therapists must be sure to avoid blame laying--to identify abused women's psychological response as a result, not a cause, of the abuse.

Accompanying this goal of nurturance, is the feminist therapy goal of increasing self-esteem of abused women (Burstow, 1992; LaRouche et al, 1983). Walker (1989) maintains that, ultimately, empowering abused women leads to increased self-esteem.

Enabling abused women to find their voice--to have an increased awareness of their own needs and desires and their right to give voice to them and to have them met--is a goal identified by several in feminist therapy (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; LaRouche et al, 1983). This goes hand in hand with the goal of increased understanding of gender-role socialization, for it is patriarchal socialization which demands selflessness of women.

A final goal of feminist therapy is to facilitate the healing process for women recovering from the effects of abuse. This is a holistic healing, involving emotional, cognitive, behavioral, physical, and spiritual aspects (Dutton, 1992). For Dutton, this

healing includes symptom reduction (e.g., reduction of anxiety, depression, etc.), shame reduction, integration of the traumatic experience, facilitation of the grief process, and the establishment of a life free of violence.

Some feminist therapists also include a goal of '*breaking the cycle of violence*' and of eliminating '*learned helplessness*' (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987; Nadelson & Sauzier, 1989; LaRouche et al, 1983). These two issues have been discussed previously and dismissed for their lack of empirical support and for their contradiction of feminist principles in their pathologization of women. Subsequently they are not included here.

In summary, the goals common to the practice of feminist therapy with abused women include: a) increased safety and protection, b) empowerment, c) increased understanding of the social context of male violence against women, d) increased understanding of the social context of the psychological effects on women of this abuse, e) breaking the isolation, f) nurturance and validation, g) increased self-esteem, h) increased awareness of abused women's own needs and desires, i) increased awareness of the right to voice these needs and to have them met, and j) facilitation of holistic healing from the effects of the abuse. Of these goals, four are common to the general practice of feminist therapy (e.g., empowerment, nurturance and validation, increased awareness of own needs and desires and of the right to have these met, and increased self-esteem) and three are specific to the needs of women abused by their intimate male partners (e.g., increased safety and protection, breaking the isolation, and the facilitation of holistic healing from the effects of abuse). Two of the goals involve the adaptation of the feminist techniques of analysis of power and of gender-role socialization to meet the needs of abused women

(e.g., increased understanding of the social context of male violence against women and of its psychological effects on women).

Having thus explored the goals of feminist therapy with abused women, the next step should be an examination of the competencies and knowledge required of feminist therapists working with abused women. These shall be briefly addressed in the section which follows.

### **Required Competencies & Knowledge for Work with Abused Women**

In addition to general knowledge of and skills in achieving feminist therapy goals, some other specific knowledge and competencies have been identified as essential for feminist therapists working with women abused by their intimate male partners (Dutton, 1992; Walker, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). These include: knowledge about male abuse of women and its effects; knowledge of legal and social resources available to abused women; the ability to effectively advocate for the safety of abused women; the ability to allow abused women the right of self-determination; the ability to make effective and appropriate use of self-disclosure; and the ability to take effective pro-social action.

A therapist's knowledge about male abuse of women and its effects can have a particularly powerful impact in therapy. This includes such issues as: the considerable potential danger posed to abused women, to their abusers, and to the therapist involved (Worell & Remer, 1992); the high percentage of women who remain in or return to abusive relationships, the right of women to do so, and the considerable economic, social, and physical resources required to make leaving a realistic possibility (Worell & Remer,

1992); the degree of vulnerability experienced by abused women which makes the establishment of egalitarian therapeutic relationships very difficult (Walker, 1990); the nature of abused women's symptoms as results, not pathological causes, of the abuse (Dutton, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992); the nature of coping strategies (including denial and compliance) as strengths, not as learned helplessness; the nature of substance abuse (when it occurs) as a result, not a cause, of abuse; the possible long-term nature of the recovery; and the nature of abuse as involving noncompensable losses which require grief work on the part of the abused women (Dutton, 1992).

This knowledge and these skills are essential if feminist therapists are to be effective in achieving therapeutic goals with abused women. How these goals are specifically achieved shall be the focus of the section which follows.

## **Feminist Therapy Techniques with Abused Women**

A number of techniques have been identified by feminist therapists as effective when working with abused women. Some of these stem directly from previous work of feminist therapists with other clients, while other techniques have been adopted from traditional therapy backgrounds and transformed to meet the requirements of feminist therapy. While these techniques have been variously used in group and individual treatment settings, there is a strong consensus that group work can be particularly effective in feminist therapy, for it makes it easier to break the isolation commonly faced by abused women; in so doing, it also makes it easier for abused women to recognize that the problem is not an individual one, but one common to many women and which is

embedded in the social context of women's societal oppression (Gary, 1991; Goudreault, 1986; LaRouche et al, 1983). While most of the feminist therapy with abused women is subsequently in a group setting, ultimately, feminist therapists agree that the feminist therapy principles which honors each individual women's perspective requires that the final choice be the client's (Bilodeau & Dumouchel, 1987).

In describing some feminist therapy techniques used with women to deal with the psychological effects of abuse, Dutton (1992) identifies three major categories: interventions concerned with choice making and its subcategory of interventions which challenge cognitions, as well as interventions which focus on the healing of and recovery from the psychological effects of abuse. Since techniques described by other feminist therapy practitioners fit well into these three categories (Burstow, 1992; Goudreault, 1988; LaRouche et al, 1983; Walker, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992), these categories shall be accepted for the purposes of this dissertation.

### **Feminist Therapy Techniques Concerned with Choice Making**

In describing techniques concerned with choice making, Dutton (1992) is referring to techniques which provide abused women with necessary resources and which enable them to develop the skills necessary to gain control over their lives and to believe in their right to do so.

A number of feminist therapy techniques fall into this category for empowering abused women. One technique involves the encouraging of self-nurturance (Dutton, 1992). Through this technique, abused women are enabled to identify their emotional and

physical needs (safety, relaxation, exercise, nutrition, etc.), their right to have these met, and ways in which to accomplish this. Other techniques in this category involve providing abused women with access to economic resources, social support (particularly from other abused women in group therapy), and information concerning abuse and its effects such that women can recognize their response as a normal response to an extreme situation (Dutton, 1992).

### **Feminist Therapy Techniques to Challenge Cognitions**

This subcategory includes techniques which are used to empower women in their control over their lives through examining and challenging their cognitions. These include: feminist analysis of power and gender-role socialization; challenging women's minimization or denial of abuse; reattribution of responsibility for the violence to its rightful owner--the abuser; increasing awareness of viable alternatives; increasing behavioral skills to make leaving a more realistic possibility; increasing coping strategies; increasing self-esteem and self-efficacy through support and validation; decreasing self-blame; increasing self-expression; and increasing their sense of being heard (i.e., finding their voice) through the opportunity to tell their story in a supportive environment (Burstow, 1992; Dutton, 1992; LaRouche et al, 1983; Worell & Remer, 1992).

### **Feminist Therapy Techniques for Healing**

This category involves feminist therapy techniques used to facilitate healing and recovery of abused women from the psychological effects of abuse. In establishing this

category, Dutton (1992) describes healing as a "process of restoring the whole person to a state of wholeness and health, health being more than merely an absence of symptoms" (p. 131). One technique to accomplish this healing involves working through the re-experiencing of the trauma. This common response (i.e., the re-experiencing of the emotional and behavioral response originally experienced at the moment of the trauma) can be dealt with by allowing abused women to gradually explore, in a safe environment, the full array of feelings associated with the abuse. Another technique focuses on reducing shame--a normal response to intimate abuse, exacerbated by isolation and internalization of societal messages. A third technique--anger work--enables abused women to acknowledge and give voice to their feelings of anger--a difficult task for women given their socialization which defines anger as '*masculine*'. To accomplish this anger work, Dutton (1992) recommends verbal exploration, journal keeping, and the expression of anger through physical outlets and through the creative arts. She also recommends participation in social activism on the part of the abused woman at a later point in the therapeutic process. Grief work is another technique Dutton identifies as important in facilitating the healing process for abused women. Often neglected in traditional therapy is the recognition of the real and significant losses faced by women in abusive relationships. These losses include loss of trust, loss of a relationship (with its positive aspects as well as its negative ones), realistic fear of the loss of the children or of their love should they identify with the father, loss of income and security (including the basic necessities), and the loss of self--metaphorically identified as the loss of voice. Through verbal exploration, the therapist can enable abused women to recognize these losses, to work through the

**grief process, and to move on. Two final techniques to facilitate healing involve allowing abused women to make sense of the experience through identification of both positive and negative outcomes and enabling them to start building a new life in identifying themselves as survivors, not as victims--as strong women who have successfully overcome great obstacles and who have the right to be valued and to live a life free of violence (Dutton, 1992).**

**This chapter has examined the use of feminist therapy with abused women, showing it to be a small but growing practice. The goals of such a practice include: the empowerment of abused women, their increased safety; their increased understanding of the social context of male violence against women and of its psychological effects; the breaking of their isolation; increased nurturance and self-esteem; increased awareness of personal needs and of their right to voice these and to have them met; and physical and emotional healing. The techniques used by feminist therapists to accomplish these goals have been shown to fall into three categories: techniques concerned with choice making, with challenging cognitions, and with facilitating healing. These techniques reflect a variety of approaches, but are aimed at the common goal of women's empowerment, with the underlying belief in the importance of the sociopolitical context.**

**Thus feminist therapy can and has been used to empower abused women. While it can and has been used to help women achieve physical safety, I believe its greatest contribution lies in its capacity to enable women to recover from the damages of inner abuse. For, while media coverage continues to focus on the physical harm done, abused women themselves agree that it is the harm to the inner self--indeed, the loss of self--**



which is the most damaging and most long lasting. Feminist therapy, with its focus on the sociopolitical context and on empowerment, enables women to find their inner self--to find their own unique voice.

## Section II

# Feminist Music Therapy

## 9. Towards A Feminist Music Therapy

As a first step in the development of feminist music therapy, the first section of this dissertation has carefully examined feminist therapy, its understanding of power and of male violence against women, and its principles, goals, and techniques. The ability of feminist therapy to empower women in general, and abused women in particular, has been explored.

In the second section of this dissertation, attention shall be directed towards music therapy and its feminist transformation in the development of a model of feminist music therapy. Its potential to empower women of diverse backgrounds in general and abused women in particular shall be explored. Specific attention shall be given to the particular needs of White, Black, and Native women and the ability of feminist music therapy to meet those needs.<sup>22</sup>

The development of a feminist music therapy through the integration of feminist therapy and music therapy shall be the focus of this chapter. To accomplish this task, I shall first examine basic concepts of the theory of music therapy and of music therapy

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<sup>22</sup>I choose to use the term *Native women* only after careful deliberation. While the term *Native American women* is popularly used in the United States, it excludes those women from Canada and Mexico. The term *First Nations' women*, which is popularly used in Canada, is more inclusive; it is not, however, a term familiar to those outside of Canada.

techniques. This shall be followed by an exploration of general guidelines for the transformation of any theory to allow its integration with feminist therapy (Worell & Remer, 1992). The chapter shall then conclude with an outline of specific requirements for the transformation of music therapy theory and music therapy techniques in the creation of a feminist music therapy.

## **Music Therapy Theory**

While previously most of the attention in music therapy, as a relatively new profession, has been focused on treatment outcomes, more recently attention has been directed towards theoretical considerations (Gfeller, 1987; Unkefer, 1990; Wheeler, 1983). With the recognition of the importance of a sound theoretical foundation for music therapy practice has come a move from a more intuitive approach to theory development towards a more self-conscious approach. This is reflected in a small, but increasing, number of articles specifically addressing music therapy theory.

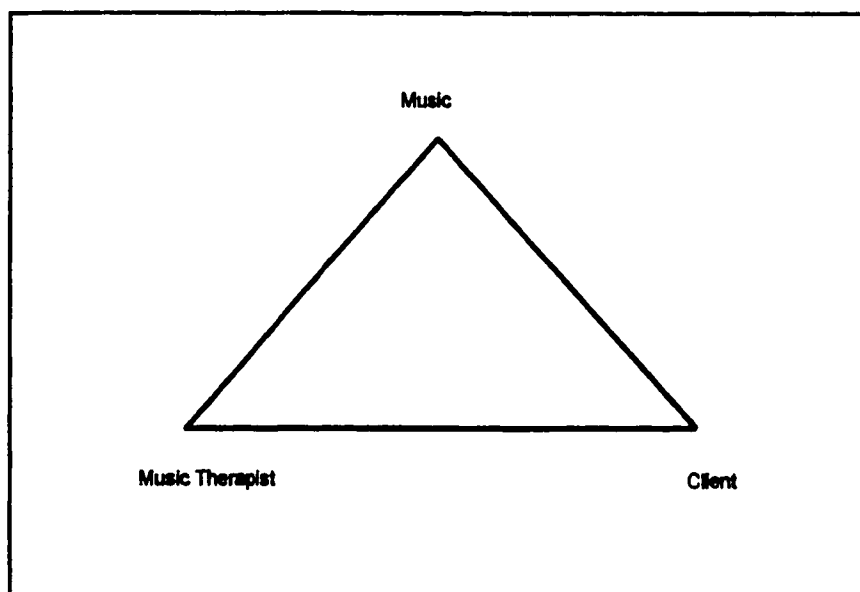
A review of the music therapy literature reveals that there is no one single unifying theory in music therapy (Gfeller, 1987; Hadsell, 1974; Maranto, 1993; Scovel, 1990; Unkefer, 1990). Rather, music therapy has traditionally involved the linking of music therapy techniques to a number of external theories from traditional disciplines. These have included (and still do): psychoanalytic, behavioral, humanistic, existential, Gestalt, and interpersonal approaches (Hadsell, 1974). During the period of 1964 to 1984, the two most prominent theories in the United States, as determined by a content analysis of the *Journal of Music Therapy*, were shown to be the psychoanalytic and the behavioral

approaches (Gfeller, 1987). Over that 20-year time span, interest in the use of the psychoanalytic approach decreased, while that in the use of a behavioral approach increased. From the 1980's until the present, cognitive, physiological, biopsychosocial, and holistic approaches have become increasingly prominent (Maranto, 1993). An examination of the theoretical orientation of current training programs in Canada has shown the program in British Columbia to be predominantly humanistic (with a growing interest in a unique music therapy model) and those in Quebec and Ontario to be eclectic (Maranto, 1993). Of the educational training programs in the United States, 27% are eclectic, 18% behavioral, 14% special education, 10% humanistic, 6% Gestalt, 5% existential, 5% psychodynamic, and 5% holistic. Of the American clinical training programs, 54% are eclectic, 35% behavioral, 31% psychodynamic, 23% special education, 18% humanistic, 9% holistic, 1% research based, and 6% identified simply as '*other*' (Maranto, 1993).

The music therapy profession as a whole has thus been shown to be eclectic as a profession, drawing from more than one theory taken from other disciplines (Scovel, 1990). Furthermore, some music therapists personally adopt eclectic approaches at the individual level (Maranto, 1993). For many, this eclecticism is not only a result of the particular development of the music therapy profession, it is also a source of the strength of the music therapy profession.

If one model of understanding ever comes to establish itself at the cost of all others, it could mean that man's [sic] potential views of himself [sic] would be decreased. The field of music therapy, therefore, ought to be an open field where different models of understanding are given the possibilities to collaborate with each other. (Ruud, 1980, p. 71)

Regardless of the specific model adopted, music therapy can be seen to involve the interaction and the subsequent relationships established between three components: the music/musical experience, the music therapist, and the music therapy client (Maranto, 1993). These components have been conceptualized in their relationship to each other as three sides of a triangle, each essential to the other. The end result, with the elimination of any single one of the three parts of the conceptual triangle, would not be music therapy (See Figure 2). The particular model adopted from other disciplines (be it behavioral, psychoanalytic, or humanistic, etc.) encompasses two of the three components of this conceptual triangle--the client and the music therapist. It does so in providing such information as a theory of personality development and human growth, definitions of



**Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Music Therapy**

mental health and mental illness, and guidelines for therapeutic process and practices. The music therapist has traditionally transformed this information into appropriate music therapy techniques.

Recent attention to the issue of music therapy theory has led beyond an exploration of the manner in which various external theories fit into this conceptual music therapy triangle to an exploration of the possible existence of a unique theory of music therapy independent of theories from other disciplines (Gfeller, 1987; Maranto, 1993). Maranto (1993) contends that "if one does exist, it has not yet been well defined, identified as such, or universally accepted . . . " (p. 627). Others maintain that, if there is a unique theory of music therapy, it is to be found in the third part of the music therapy conceptual triangle--the music/musical experience component (Gfeller, 1990 & 1987; Thaut, 1990; Thaut & Smeltekopf, 1990; Unkefer, 1990). Rather than develop a unique theory of personality development, mental health, and so on, this approach has been to develop a unique theory concerning the human response to music. "To devise a well-structured theoretical foundation of music therapy practice, music's function within external psychological and physiological theories should be clearly described in terms of its psychoacoustic properties" (Gfeller, 1987, pp. 191-192). Certainly, while the connection of music therapy goals and techniques to other theories has been a major category studied in the development of music therapy theory, there have also been other major categories studied: music's therapeutic value to elicit psychophysiological responses and, in keeping with Gaston's (1968) classic principles, music's therapeutic value to order and/or energize through rhythm, to facilitate self-actualization, and to enhance interpersonal interaction

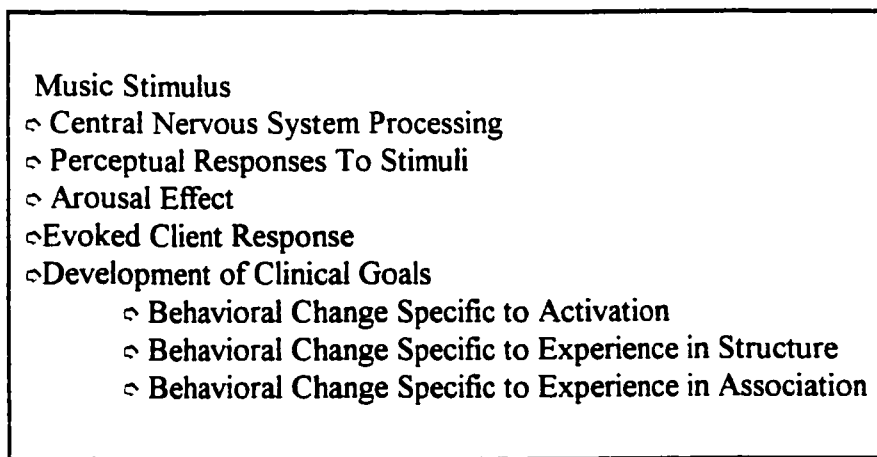
and social integration (Gfeller, 1987). These categories encompass the third component of the music therapy conceptual triangle--the music/musical experiences. They also touch on the other two components, in that they involve the client's responses to music and the relationship established between client and music therapist through music experiences. It is this area which is increasingly looked to as a source of a unique theory of music therapy.

## **A Unique Theory of Music Therapy**

The increased focus of attention on human response to music in the development of a music therapy theory has proven to be quite fruitful. Substantial evidence has been collected which indicates that music is a unique and effective treatment medium because of its capacity to evoke physiological, affective, and cognitive responses (Nolan, 1989; Parente, 1989; Thaut, 1990; Thaut & Smeltekop, 1990). It accomplishes this by stimulating brain functions involved in memory, in learning, and in motivation and emotional states (Thaut, 1990). With this intrinsic capacity, music has considerable potential to influence human personality and behavior, and to activate healthy thinking (Thaut, 1990; Thaut & Smeltekop, 1990).

Thaut (1990) provides an excellent model illustrating exactly how and why music has such therapeutic potential. Within this model, comprehensive research findings are summarized in a thorough yet clear fashion (see Figure 3).





**Figure 3. Thaut's Theoretical Model of Music Therapy**

In elaborating on his model, Thaut (1990) describes the music stimulus as having three types of properties: psychophysical properties (e.g., dynamics, tempo, wave and color form, rate of change, etc.), collative properties (e.g., musical patterns, structural elements, etc.), and ecological properties (e.g., associations, memories, evoked imagery, learned moods, etc.). These properties of music are processed by the central nervous system, resulting in increased functional connectivity between the neocortex and limbic structures, which leads to an arousal effect. This is mediated by such perceptual responses as attention, exploration, motivation, reinforcement, and discrimination. Because the same centers of the brain are responsible for arousal, hedonic processing, and music processing, music elicits changes in arousal and subsequently in alertness, activation, motivation, emotional response, and perception of reward and pleasure. The result of this is what Thaut refers to as "evoked client response".

Thaut describes evoked client responses as they relate to the three properties of music stimuli. The psychophysical properties of music evoke a group of responses which Thaut categorizes as "specific to activating behavior" (e.g., change in motor activity, reduction in anxiety and tension, increase in motivation and positive mood, stimulation of positive feelings, provision of immediate reward experience, etc.). The collative properties of music evoke a group of responses which Thaut categorizes as "specific to experience in structure" (e.g., stimulation of cognitive and affective areas of functional behavior, access to nonverbal communication, alteration of feeling states, reduction of stress and anxiety, and change in emotion through such time-ordered aspects of music as tension-release structure, etc.). The ecological properties of music evoke a group of responses which Thaut categorizes as "specific to experience in association" (e.g., activation of affective processes, facilitation of awareness and recognition of feelings--including repressed feelings--reduction of stress through imagery and mood associations of music, etc.). Thaut adds that the response evoked by ecological properties is not to the music itself, but to the moods, memories, and learned associations of the music, and thus it can be difficult to control or predict. Thaut also notes that all three categories of evoked client responses can be elicited by a variety of music stimuli, including both receptive, listening-based music experiences and expressive, performance-based music experiences.

The final portion of Thaut's model outlines the development of clinical music therapy goals which can be achieved through the use of music as a catalyst for change. These goals are chosen by the music therapist, in collaboration with the client, on the basis of the client's evoked responses to the music; subsequently these goals fall into three

categories as well: behavioral, cognitive, and affective change specific to activation, to experience in structure, and to experience in association. Thaut provides some examples of the three categories of music therapy goals for behavior, cognitive, and affective change: to facilitate the experience, identification, and expression of emotions; to synthesize, control, and change emotional behavior; to facilitate an understanding of the emotional communication of others; to provide a rewarding self-experience; to decrease anxiety and tension; to increase relaxation; and to increase attention. To this list of clinical music therapy goals, Thaut and Smeltekop (1990) add the use of music therapy to stimulate perceptual and motor activity, to aid in interpersonal interaction, to promote cognitive organization, and to improve self-concept.

It should be noted that Thaut stresses the importance of affective change--and music's capacity to evoke it--for the achievement of all goals. While important, behavioral and cognitive changes alone are insufficient without concomitant affective changes. Thus the neurophysiological response to music which results in arousal and subsequent affective changes, as described in Thaut's model, is of considerable importance. This recognition of the therapeutic value of music's capacity as a language of emotions represents a common thread running through much of the music therapy literature. People are encultured to view the arts as a means of communication of emotions (Gfeller, 1990). Like speech, music conveys meaning. Indeed, there is a strong consensus concerning the general mood of particular music pieces. As well, within particular cultures, standard music devices are developed to facilitate communication (e.g., in the music of Western civilization, major keys are traditionally used to convey happiness and minor keys to convey melancholy or

sadness). In some instances, iconicity is used in music as a means of communication (e.g., music which imitates bird calls, water sounds, etc.). Thus, like speech, music's meaning lies in its cultural context. Yet music is like no other language. By communicating emotions through symbols, it transcends the intellectual and the rational. Being nondiscursive, nonreferential, and nondenotative, it requires that the listener provide the meaning. Thus music can have a rich multiplicity of meanings. It is, perhaps, because of this richness and flexibility that music allows us to express that which is inexpressible. "There would be no music if it were possible to communicate verbally that which is easily communicated musically" (Gfeller, 1990, p. 52).

In this section of the chapter, the issue of music therapy theory has been explored. Music therapy has been shown traditionally to integrate a variety of external theories from other disciplines with music therapy techniques. In Canada and the United States, while these have changed over time, the most predominant theories currently are eclectic, humanistic, and behavioral. The more recent development of a unique music therapy theory has been examined. As described by Thaut (1990), this theory outlines the human response to music and how that can be used in therapy. The unique properties of music have been shown, upon processing by the central nervous system and mediation by perception, to produce a neurological arousal effect which results in a number of evoked responses. It has been suggested that these responses can be used by the therapist, in collaboration with the client, as the basis for establishing clinical goals and techniques to be used to achieve affective, cognitive, and/or behavioral changes. It has been shown that this theory serves to outline the psychophysiological effects of music, documenting the

effectiveness of music and the relationship established between the client and the music therapist within music experiences in therapy.

Given this unique music therapy theory with its sole focus on human response to music and given the tradition of integrating music therapy practice with other theories, the integration of music therapy with feminist therapy would seem quite appropriate. Such a feminist transformation of music therapy would combine music therapy principles concerning the use of music to achieve affective, cognitive, and behavioral changes with feminist therapy principles concerning which changes are to be sought and in what fashion. It would require an analysis of music therapy techniques for the purpose of adopting those appropriate to the purposes and practices of feminist therapy, and of modifying, where possible, those which are not.

To this end, the next section of this chapter shall explore a variety of currently-used music therapy techniques. The function of each shall be examined for the purpose of their later adoption or adaptation in the development of a feminist music therapy.

## **Music Therapy Techniques**

A review of the literature indicates a wide variety of music therapy techniques used to achieve an equally wide variety of therapeutic goals. Unkefer (1990) and Maranto (1993) both provide excellent classification systems for the numerous currently-used music therapy techniques. While thorough, each overlooks something included by the other and subsequently I propose a classification system which is a conglomeration of categories identified by both Unkefer (1990) and Maranto (1993). In this new

comprehensive classification system, music therapy techniques are divided into six categories: receptive or listening-based, performance, compositional, music and movement, music and other expressive arts, and recreational techniques (see Table 1).

<b>MUSIC THERAPY TECHNIQUES</b>	
<b>I. Receptive or Listening-Based Techniques</b>	
1. Audioanalgesia	12. Projective improvisation
2. Music meditation	13. Music desensitization
3. Music biofeedback	14. Contingent music
4. Music & progressive muscle relaxation	15. Lyric analysis/song discussion
5. Music-centered relaxation	16. Sensory stimulation through music
6. Music & imagery	17. Music mnemonics
7. Directed music imagery	18. Reality orientation through music
8. Music entrainment	19. Song histories
9. Music vibroacoustic therapy	20. Structured reminiscence
10. Guided Imagery & Music (G.I.M.)	21. Life review
11. Projective music listening	
<b>II. Music Performance Techniques</b>	
1. Instrumental group improvisation, process-oriented	5. Individual instrumental instruction, product-oriented
2. Instrumental performing ensemble, product-oriented	6. Individual vocal instruction, product oriented
3. Group singing therapy, process-oriented	7. Individual music improvisation, process-oriented
4. Vocal performing ensemble, product-oriented	
<b>III. Compositional Techniques</b>	
1. Most common: songwriting	
<b>IV. Music &amp; Movement Techniques</b>	
1. Movement awareness	4. Expressive movement
2. Movement exploration	5. Dance
3. Movement interaction	6. Music & exercise
<b>V. Music &amp; Other Expressive Arts Techniques</b>	
<b>VI. Recreational Techniques</b>	
1. Music games	3. Recreational music performance groups
2. Music appreciation	4. Leisure skills development

**Table 1. Maranto/Unkefer Classification of Music Therapy Techniques**

Receptive music therapy techniques are numerous and can involve live, recorded, precomposed, or improvised music (Maranto, 1993). Audioanalgesia, music meditation, music biofeedback, music and progressive muscle relaxation training, music-centered relaxation, music and imagery, directed music imagery, and music entrainment all, to some degree, fall into Unkefer's classification of music for relaxation. Audioanalgesia is the use of music to suppress pain, or at least to increase the pain tolerance threshold. In music meditation, music is used to produce a meditative state. Music can also be used as a cue for relaxation when paired with biofeedback. Music paired with progressive muscle relaxation training serves to augment the relaxation effect and to condition the client's relaxation response to music. Music-centered relaxation involves the use of music as a perceptual focus in order to distract attention from various causes of tension and/or pain. Music and imagery involves spontaneous imagery elicited from the client while listening to music. It is often preceded by an *'induction'* (i.e., therapist suggestions concerning relaxation and imagery) and can be used to facilitate increased self-awareness, as well as relaxation. Directed music imagery is a technique whereby specific directions about relaxation and imagery are made by the therapist while the client listens to music. Music entrainment is a technique in which the therapist matches improvised or prerecorded music to the client's level (e.g., mood, activity, speech, etc.) and then gradually changes it.

Music vibroacoustic therapy is one of the receptive techniques used for purposes other than relaxation. It involves the application of music or low frequencies directly to the body for psychological, physical, or medical purposes; this may or may not be accompanied by music listening. The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)

entails the verbal reporting by the client to the therapist of spontaneous images at the moment the client is listening to specific music selections. The therapist interacts with the client during this process by providing verbal suggestions for "focusing and deepening the process" (Maranto, 1993). The purpose of GIM is to achieve altered states of consciousness and to retrieve subconscious material. After the music is finished, GIM sessions typically end with a discussion, and sometimes creative artwork, concerning the experience. Projective music listening involves the interpretation on the part of the therapist, for diagnostic purposes, of images elicited from the client in response to music. Similarly, projective improvisation involves the use of music improvised by the therapist to elicit words, stories, and discussion from the client. Music desensitization, on the other hand, is a technique which incorporates music into the behavioral technique of systematic desensitization; music serves to enhance the imagery which is a necessary part of the process. Contingent music is another behavioral technique which provides music as reinforcement contingent upon the occurrence of some desired behavior. Lyric analysis is a popular technique used in a variety of ways, depending on the specific therapeutic goal. Music can also be used as sensory stimulation for those with either sensory or cognitive deficits. Music mnemonics refers to the technique of using music as a cue to facilitate recall and memory training. Techniques with self-explanatory names--reality orientation through music, song histories, structured reminiscence, and life review--all make use of music's ecological properties.

Music performance techniques comprise the second category of music therapy techniques. This category covers a wide variety of techniques used to achieve a great



diversity of therapeutic goals. These techniques involve individual and group work, improvisation and performance, instrumental and vocal music, and process-oriented (i.e., focused on the interactions which occur during the actual music making) and product-oriented (i.e., focused on the musical end product) approaches. According to Unkefer (1990), process-oriented instrumental and vocal improvisation and performance can be used to improve social interaction skills, communication, expression of emotions, and self-esteem. Product-oriented instrumental and vocal performing groups can be used to develop cooperation through the teaching and rehearsal process, as well as to increase self-esteem. Product-oriented individual instrumental and vocal instruction, with their focus on music skills acquisition, can be used to improve communication, self-esteem, frustration tolerance, and interpersonal skills.

Unkefer (1990) identifies the immediate creative process as the focus of individual music improvisation, whose goal is to provide a nonverbal means of communication. Maranto (1993) highlights the diagnostic and therapeutic importance of the improvisation technique in music therapy by identifying the great number of current music therapy approaches based on improvisation: Nordoff & Robbins' Creative Music Therapy, Orff Improvisation, Bruscia's Experimental Improvisation Therapy, and Boxill's Continuum of Awareness Approach, to name just a few. Some of these improvisation techniques rely entirely on music, while others involve some combination of music and verbal interaction. Each adapts the improvisation process so that it is in keeping with their own particular philosophy of treatment and of client needs.

Compositional techniques in music therapy are less varied, although still as widely used as other techniques. The most common compositional technique involves the client and the music therapist in the process of songwriting. This technique can be process-oriented or product-oriented, and it can be used for a number of different purposes, depending on client needs: to explore particular issues, to increase self-expression, to increase awareness of emotions and cognitions of self and of others, to increase interpersonal skills, and to increase self-esteem. The songwriting process can involve composition of original lyrics and/or music.

The category of music and movement techniques is a contribution from Unkefer's (1990) classification system. This category includes a number of techniques with self-explanatory names: movement awareness, movement exploration, movement interaction, expressive movement, dance, and exercise to music. The goals of these music and movement techniques include: the exploration of body image, the improvement of physical self-confidence, the encouragement of nonverbal expression, the development of social interaction skills, the development of leisure skills, and the enhancement of motivation and effectiveness of exercise. Optimally, dance techniques should be done in collaboration with dance therapists.

In discussing the music therapy technique category of music combined with other expressive arts, Unkefer (1990) gives specific mention to the fine arts and to creative writing. Optimally, this too should be done in collaboration with other creative arts therapists.

In the category of recreational techniques, Unkefer (1990) identifies a small number of techniques: music games, music appreciation awareness, recreational music performing groups, and leisure skills development. Maranto (1993) categorizes these techniques as being either process-oriented or product-oriented.

In his system of classification, Unkefer (1990) includes an additional music therapy technique category--music psychotherapy. Within this category, Unkefer identifies three major techniques: supportive music group and individual therapy, interactive music group and individual therapy, and catalytic music group and individual therapy. Supportive music therapy involves the use of a variety of music experiences as a catalyst for therapy. Interactive music therapy uses music to initiate therapy for the purpose of gaining insight into conscious conflicts. Catalytic music therapy uses music to increase awareness of subconscious conflicts. While Unkefer places these three in a separate category, they use techniques found in the previously outlined six categories. Rather than representing a separate category, I believe they are better considered as different levels of intervention, having different goals, within these six categories.

Since the ultimate purpose of this dissertation is the development of feminist music therapy to be used specifically with abused women, this section will conclude with a brief examination of the techniques currently used by music therapists working with abused women.

The most recent information available to date concerning music therapy with abused women is provided by Cassity and Theobald (1990). In a survey of 2,564 music therapists of the American Association for Music Therapy (AAMT) and the National

Association for Music Therapy (NAMT), they found that only 80 work in the area of *'domestic violence'*, and of those only 45 work specifically with *'battered women'*.<sup>23</sup> While Cassity and Theobald (1990) identified no specific theoretical orientation (and certainly no feminist one), they did determine that a practice of music therapy with commonly-employed techniques does exist.

A review of these identified techniques reveals that they all fit neatly into the Maranto/Unkefer classification of music therapy techniques. Goals involving behavioral change (e.g., increased assertiveness and confrontation skills, decreased isolative behavior and cognitive distortions, etc.) have been addressed through the use of such techniques as lyric analysis, instrumental improvisation, and movement to music. Goals involving affect change (e.g., increased recognition and expression of emotions, etc.) have been addressed by such techniques as song composition, instrumental and vocal improvisation, movement to music, and lyric analysis and discussion. Physical and emotional relaxation goals have been addressed through a variety of music relaxation and music imagery techniques, as well as the movement to music and exercise to music techniques identified in the Maranto/Unkefer classification. Cognitive goals (e.g., decreased *'learned helplessness'*, *'learned victim behavior'*, irrational negative self-talk, minimalization or denial of abuse, etc.) have been addressed through music composition, music/lyric analysis, music instruction, and music combined with art.

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<sup>23</sup>The use of the terms *'domestic violence'* and *'battered women'* is the choice of Cassity and Theobald, not mine.

Goals involving interpersonal skills development (e.g., decreased social isolation, increased social involvement, etc.) have been addressed through group music therapy improvisation and performance experiences. Goals dealing with possible chemical dependency problems have been addressed through lyric analysis and songwriting. Thus it can be seen that, while goals are specific to the identified needs of abused women (as determined by the individual philosophical approach of each therapist), the music therapy techniques are similar to those found in general music therapy practice, as identified in the Maranto/Unkefer classification.

In this section, the full scope of music therapy techniques has been explored. Music therapy techniques used in general practice and those used specifically with abused women have been found to fall into six categories, as outlined in the Maranto/Unkefer classification system (receptive, performance, compositional, movement, expressive arts, and recreational techniques). This classification of music therapy techniques illustrates how the human response to music can be used to effect change in therapy. It is subsequently very much in keeping with the unique theory of music therapy outlined by Thaut (1990). Most of these techniques can and have been readily adapted to meet the requirements of theories from other disciplines. It would seem logical to conclude that these music therapy techniques, as well as the theory of music therapy, could just as readily be adapted to meet the requirements of feminist therapy.

Prior to exploring this feminist transformation of music therapy, I believe it is important to first address the issue of naming. The power of naming--which grants the existence of a thing and determines its very nature--has been highlighted in previous

chapters. What name then should be given to the final product of a feminist transformation of music therapy? Feminist music therapy would at first appear the logical choice. Yet, in the development of feminist therapy, some have argued for its renaming, for the replacement of the term *'therapy'* with such alternative terms as *'counseling'*, *'facilitation'*, or *'consultation'*. Proponents for renaming believed that such a renaming would eliminate the power imbalance inherent in traditional therapy. Certainly the concept of renaming has much appeal to feminists, many of whom have committed much effort and imagination towards the creation of new words to describe women's experiences. Yet the experiences of feminist therapists have not shown renaming in this particular case to successfully transform the balance of power in therapy. "Dressed in new clothes, the relationships in these circumstances nonetheless failed to attend consciously and intentionally to the nature of the exchange [in therapy]" (Brown, 1994, p. 96). Rather than serving to transform the power imbalance, renaming simply served to perpetuate it, while denying its very existence. The answer lies not in renaming feminist therapy, but in the active efforts of feminist therapists in acknowledging and dealing with the issue of power in therapy. The same holds true in naming feminist music therapy--any other name would fail to eliminate the problems inherent in traditional therapy, while serving to mask those self-same problems. As well, in the case of feminist music therapy, any other name (e.g., feminist music counseling, music consultation) would be vague and unclear in meaning.

Some have argued that it is not the name of *'therapy'* which is problematic, but the very existence of therapy. Because therapy has been used to maintain the status quo in patriarchal culture, feminist therapy is questioned by some as an oxymoron. Therapy can

and has been used such that "oppression becomes psychologized as a pathological entity" (Perkins, 1991, p. 326). Brown (1994) acknowledges that feminist therapy does indeed run this risk of transforming the political into the personal, but she also acknowledges that this does not necessarily have to be. Feminist therapy has the potential to subvert the patriarchal status quo--to change the sociopolitical at the same time as healing the personal for individual women harmed by patriarchy. To do so, however, feminist therapists must commit equal time and energy to both personal and political change, understanding their intimate interconnection.

If feminist therapy is to subvert patriarchy one life at a time, one therapy hour at a time, it can only do so when self-criticism and self scrutiny, within a feminist political framework, are as much a part of the work as is attention to any other aspect of therapy. (Brown, 1994, p. 45).

Feminist therapy, and similarly feminist music therapy, must be practiced not only as a healing art for individuals, but also as an "intentional act of radical social change directed at those social arrangements in which oppressive imbalances of power hold sway" (Brown, 1994, p. 30). Within this framework, a feminist transformation of music therapy, with its renaming as feminist music therapy, is indeed possible and, I believe, desirable. In order to accomplish this transformation, I shall first examine the guidelines for the feminist transformation of any theory and its techniques. This shall be the focus of the section which follows.

## **Feminist Transformation**

Feminist therapists generally undergo training within a traditional therapeutic approach and only become involved with feminist therapy at some later point subsequent to their entry into clinical practice (Worell & Remer, 1992). Consequently practicing clinicians, like music therapists, are equally divided among those who adhere to one of a number of established approaches and those who adopt an eclectic approach. Regardless of approach, each feminist therapist must undergo a process (much like I am proposing for music therapy) of evaluating her own theoretical assumptions and transforming theory and technique so that they are compatible with the principles and practices of feminist therapy. To assist therapists in this process, Worell & Remer (1992) provide an excellent outline for feminist theory transformation in their book, *Feminist Perspectives in Therapy: An Empowerment Model for Women*. It is this model to which I turn next.

Worell & Remer (1992) identify five prerequisite criteria of any approach in order to make a feminist transformation possible. The theory must be (or be able to be modified such that it is) gender free, flexible, interactionist, life-span oriented, and such that it does not violate the three major principles of feminist therapy (e.g., the personal is political, the client-therapist relationship should be egalitarian, and the female perspective is to be valued). As a result, the theory can be neither androcentric, gendercentric, intrapsychic, nor deterministic.

To be gender free or to be capable of modification such that it becomes gender free, the theory must view men and women as similar, explaining differences in terms of socialization. It must not only avoid stereotypes and the valuing of one sex over the other



(regardless of which sex that might be), it must also actively seek their elimination. Rather than being androcentric, gendercentric, or deterministic, the theory must include women in its definition of '*normal*' and must view gender differences as changeable, rather than an intrinsic part of personality or biology. Nor can the theory be intrapsychic, for it would then ignore external causes and the need for external change, and it would serve to pathologize women--effectively blaming the victim.

In identifying flexibility as an important criteria for feminist transformation, Worell & Remer (1992) are referring to the need for the theory to be applicable to and to include individuals of different groups. Worell & Remer point out that most current theories are ethnocentric and heterosexist. Rather than being ethnocentric, classist, or heterosexist, the theory, to be appropriate for feminist transformation, must include the experiences and values of individuals of all races, classes, culture, nations, sexual orientation, and abilities.

The criteria that a theory be interactionist refers to the ability of that theory to acknowledge the multiplicity of influences and the impact of their interaction on the individual. This involves the interaction between the individual and society, between the internal (e.g., affective, behavioral, and cognitive factors) and the external (e.g., power differentials, institutional barriers, etc.), as well as the interaction of a variety of discriminations--sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism.

The life-span orientation requirement of a theory for feminist transformation specifies that, although individuals are embedded in their sociocultural context, they are capable of "self-determined choice" and change, given sufficient support.

The final prerequisite of a theory for feminist transformation is that it not violate the three major principles of feminist therapy (i.e., the personal is political, relationships are to be egalitarian, and women are to be valued). From these principles derive the specific goals and techniques of all feminist practice.

Should a theory meet these five prerequisite criteria, its feminist transformation would be possible. Worell and Remer (1992) identify five steps in the actual transformation of a theory to a feminist format: a) identification of sources of bias in the theory, b) modification or elimination of sexist elements, c) subsequent assessment of the theory's viability, d) identification of the theory's components which are compatible with feminist criteria, and e) identification of components of the theory and addition of further components to facilitate the actual accomplishment of feminist goals.

To help with the first step in the feminist transformation of a theory, Worell and Remer (1992) identify a number of possible sources of bias. These include the historical development of the theory, the key theoretical concepts, the theory of personality development, the sources of clients' problems, the language and label choice, diagnosis and assessment, the role and relationship of the therapist and the client, and specific counseling techniques. These possible sources of bias need to be assessed to determine if they incorporate stereotypical cultural beliefs about women and men, if they reflect male perspective only, if they exclude women (in action or in language), if they are applied differently to women and men and subsequent value judgments made, if they include only internal (i.e., intrapsychic) aspects while ignoring external ones, if they blame or pathologize women, if they establish a large power differential between client and therapist

while placing the therapist in the role of distant expert, if they fail to value the client's perspective, and if they make use of manipulative techniques.

As mentioned previously, upon examination of the theory for bias in these areas, elimination of bias is attempted and the theory's subsequent viability for feminist transformation is determined. In addition to the identification of components of the theory which are compatible with feminist criteria, transformation also requires the identification and addition of components (including intervention techniques) which make it possible to achieve specific goals required by feminist therapy.

In this section, the method of assessment of a theory for its potential to be transformed into a feminist format has been explored in general terms. So too have Worell and Remer's (1992) practical step-by-step guidelines for the feminist transformation of any theory been outlined. In the next section of this chapter, Worell and Remer's (1992) guidelines shall be applied specifically in the feminist transformation of music therapy.

## **Feminist Transformation of Music Therapy**

### **Music Therapy's Potential for Feminist Transformation**

A review of the unique theory of music therapy, with Worell and Remer's (1992) guidelines in mind, reveals it to meet, or be readily adapted to meet, the five prerequisite criteria for feminist transformation. With its focus on human response to music, there is nothing specific which precludes it from being gender free, flexible, interactionist, or life-span oriented. While music therapy theory has not traditionally included a specific focus on women in general or on women of different races, cultures, classes, ability, and sexual

orientation, it is certainly sufficiently flexible to be modified to include these. Music therapy theory does not address the issue of the source of the individual's problems and so, while it is not specifically interactionist or life-span oriented, it too can readily be modified to become so. Finally, while music therapy theory does not necessarily or specifically adhere to feminist principles, neither does it contradict nor violate them.

In the search for specific sources of bias, as a part of the first step in the feminist transformation, music therapy's historical development proves to be a source of strength, rather than bias. Historically, music therapy has relied on a variety of other theories to inform it concerning such issues as personality development, source of client problems, diagnoses/labels, and the role of the therapist and client. The unique music therapy theory concerning human response to music has developed with its own integrity. Rather than being intrinsically enmeshed with any one theory, the music therapy profession has witnessed a long series of transformations in which one theory is grafted on, only to be removed and to be replaced by the grafting on of another. Subsequently, the paring away of all other theories should result in the elimination of biases inherent in each of these, leaving the generally neutral unique music therapy theory in an excellent position for the grafting on of the principles of feminist therapy.

Thus it can be seen that music therapy has a theory viable for feminist transformation. With the replacement of theories from other disciplines by that of feminist therapy, there is no need for major restructuring to eliminate bias. Having thus shown music therapy not to be incompatible with feminist therapy, attention should be directed next to the identification of specific ways in which it is compatible, of specific components

or techniques which can be used (as is or with modification) to facilitate the accomplishment of the goals of feminist therapy.

### **Transformation of the Client-Therapist Relationship in Music Therapy**

The unique music therapy theory, while acknowledging the importance of the client-therapist relationship within the framework of music experience, makes no specific stipulations concerning the nature of that relationship. Thus, while it does not necessarily contradict feminist therapy principles, it must be transformed to incorporate the very important and specific stipulations of feminist therapy for an egalitarian relationship. This translates into a relationship which is equal in respect and worth, if not necessarily in power, given the inherent power differential in any therapeutic relationship. The therapist must vigilantly seek, in her interactions and in her choice of therapeutic techniques, to minimize the power differential. She can and should make use of appropriate self-disclosure to this end. Given the almost automatic power differential which exists between women and men because of our patriarchal upbringing, frequently women therapists working with women clients are more effective. To place such importance on the nature of the client-therapist relationship highlights the importance of therapist attitudes, and subsequently this shall be the focus of the section which follows.

### **Transformation of the Personal Life of the Music Therapist**

Given the importance of therapist attitudes and beliefs for feminist therapy and given the silence of music therapy theory on this issue, some personal transformation will

be required so that music therapy is compatible with feminist therapy. The personal relationships of feminist music therapists themselves will have to be characterized by equality and ongoing feminist analysis. In such a way, music therapists can serve as role models for their clients. Furthermore, feminist music therapists must spend a portion of their personal lives in actively advocating for social change in order to better the external world for all women. This is in keeping with the feminist therapy principle which maintains that the major source of women's problems is external. To seek only internal solutions of the part of the woman within the framework of therapy would serve to pathologize women, rather than to empower them.

Within the framework of this transformation of music therapists' personal lives and of their therapeutic relationships with their clients, attention should be directed next to the transformation of music therapy principles and goals. This shall be the focus of the section which follows.

### **Transformation of Music Therapy Principles and Goals**

Feminist transformation of music therapy simply requires the adoption of all of the principles and goals of feminist therapy. Subsequently the principles of feminist music therapy, like those identified previously for feminist therapy, include:

1. All therapies are value laden.
2. The major source of women's *'pathology'* is sociopolitical, not personal, resulting from women's oppression in a culture which is characterized by pervasive

institutionalized sexism and in which different women's experiences differ as a result of simultaneous racism, classism, ageism, ableism, and heterosexism.

3. Power analysis is an essential part of feminist therapy .

4. Gender role analysis is also an essential part of feminist therapy, with traditional gender roles being rejected.

5. Social and political change, rather than adjustment, is an important goal.

6. Relationships of friendship and love are to be characterized by equality.

7. Similarly, the client-therapist relationship is to be egalitarian

8. The therapist's personal relationships must also be characterized by equality as well as by ongoing feminist analysis because of the importance of therapist attitudes and beliefs, with feminist therapists actively engaged in seeking social change for all women.

9. Women's issues are frequently dealt with in feminist therapy.

10. Women themselves, their perspectives, their values, and their experiences should be valued.

Similarly, the goals of feminist music therapy, being the same as those of feminist therapy, are:

1. To empower women.

2. To increase women's independence.

3. To increase women's understanding of the sociopolitical context of women's problems through a feminist analysis of power.

4. To examine the nature of women's and men's gender-role socialization.

5. To develop a self-image which includes independence, a more internal source of self-esteem, and freedom from gender-role stereotypes.
6. To achieve optimal functioning as defined by each individual woman.
7. To develop intimate relationships characterized by mutuality and equality.
8. To enable women to value women's perspectives and experiences.
9. To enable women to recover from specific damages of oppression.

### **Transformation of Music Therapy Techniques**

In this section, currently-used music therapy techniques will be examined to determine which are compatible with feminist therapy principles and which are capable of being used to obtain the goals which derive from these principles. Those which, in their present form, are not compatible will be examined for their potential to be effectively transformed.

In the Maranto/Unkefer classification, most of the music therapy techniques are generic in nature such that they can and have been adapted to obtain a variety of different goals as articulated within a variety of different theoretical orientations. Subsequently, most are compatible with feminist therapy principles, requiring simply that they be put to use, where appropriate, with the purpose of obtaining the specific goals of feminist therapy and within the framework of an egalitarian client-therapist relationship. It is these goals which will be one of the main distinguishing features of feminist music therapy. Only two of the feminist therapy goals--the increase of independence/autonomy and of self-esteem--are currently among those goals common to music therapy practice. Music



therapy techniques will have to be transformed so that they can be used to obtain the other goals which are not common to current music therapy practice (e.g., the empowerment of women, the examination of gender-role stereotypes, the development of a self-image for women which includes autonomy and freedom from these stereotypes, the achievement of individually-defined optimal functioning as opposed to that which is therapist-, theory-, or culturally-defined, the development of intimate relationships characterized by equality, the addressing of women's anger within a feminist framework, and the increase of understanding of external, societal sources of women's problems through feminist analysis of power).

Prior to a discussion of music therapy techniques appropriate in themselves or with modification, those techniques which are inappropriate or incompatible with feminist therapy principles need to be identified. Several of these are found within the Maranto/Unkefer category of receptive techniques. They include those whose goals are the exploration of intrapsychic conflict, the retrieval of subconscious material, or interpretation of the client's motivation and experiences by the therapist: projective music listening, projective improvisation, and GIM (if used to explore intrapsychic conflict). Other techniques which do not contradict feminist therapy principles, but which would not be appropriate given the identified goals are: audioanalgesia, contingent music; sensory stimulation through music, music mnemonics, and reality orientation through music. In the category of music and movement, the technique of music and exercise would not generally be appropriate to the goals of feminist therapy; nor would the category of recreational techniques. While these recreation techniques are used by some music therapists, for me

they do not constitute bonafide therapeutic techniques because of their exclusive focus on leisure and recreation. I believe there is a clear and distinct dividing line between recreational music and music therapy, and I would use these recreational techniques neither in music therapy nor in feminist music therapy practice.

Music therapy techniques which could be appropriate if structured to meet the goals of feminist therapy include receptive techniques (e.g., music meditation, music and progressive muscle relaxation, music-centered relaxation, music and imagery, music entrainment, and lyric analysis), music performance techniques (e.g., instrumental or vocal, solo or group, improvisation or performance, process- or product-oriented), compositional techniques, music and movement techniques (e.g., movement awareness, movement exploration, movement interaction, expressive movement), and music combined with other expressive arts. It should be noted that, while all the techniques identified as part of music therapy practice with abused women are appropriate, several of the purposes to which they have been put are not (e.g., to decrease learned helplessness, to decrease learned victim behaviors, etc.).

Given that therapeutic goals are one of the distinguishing characteristics of feminist therapy and given that the same music therapy techniques (when structured appropriately) can be used to achieve different therapeutic goals, this section shall conclude with a goal-oriented analysis--an examination of particular music therapy techniques which are best suited to achieve the major feminist therapy goals.

The technique of feminist analysis of gender-role socialization and of power is a hallmark of feminist therapy, and is used to accomplish a number of its major goals (e.g.,

the examination of sex-role stereotypes, the development of intimate relationships which are characterized by mutuality, the increased understanding of external societal sources of women's problems, the increased valuing of women, and the dealing with issues of anger). Two music therapy techniques which involve a combination of music and verbal processing are particularly well suited for this gender-role socialization and power analysis: lyric analysis and songwriting. The increase of self-expression and personal awareness and the exploration of issues of anger can also be achieved through these techniques, as well as through instrumental and vocal improvisation, music and movement, and music combined with other expressive arts.

The empowerment of women can involve an increase in coping skills accomplished through stress management and relaxation training. So too can the valuing of women. A number of music therapy techniques are well suited to these purposes: music and meditation, music and progressive muscle relaxation, music-centered relaxation, music and imagery, directed imagery, and music entrainment.

The goal of increased self-esteem has been touched on briefly while discussing feminist power analysis. It is, however, a goal common to the general practice of music therapy and can be addressed without as well as within a feminist analysis of power. While some of the music therapy techniques are the same as those recommended for power analysis, when used to increase self-esteem, their focus is on the development of skills and the participation in successful experiences. Music therapy techniques appropriate for use in this fashion include the full array of music performance techniques and compositional techniques. This can also involve music and movement techniques, since women in a

patriarchal culture in general, and in abusive situations in particular, receive a considerable array of negative messages about their bodies and these need to be counteracted.

In this chapter, the development of a new model of music therapy--feminist music therapy--has been outlined. Music therapy theory and techniques have been carefully examined and found to be extremely well suited for a feminist transformation. In light of the major principles and goals of feminist therapy, specific suggestions have been made for the transformation of the client-therapist relationship in music therapy, for the transformation of the music therapist's personal life, for the transformation of music therapy principles and goals, and for the transformation of specific music therapy techniques. These techniques have been shown to adapt readily for the accomplishment of the goals of feminist therapy.

Feminist music therapy appears to be quite a viable approach. The rich tradition of theory, practice, and research in both feminist therapy and music therapy provides an excellent source for the development of a uniquely powerful feminist music therapy. In this chapter, feminist music therapy has moved beyond the ethical, nonsexist framing of music therapy suggested by Baines (1992) to the complete incorporation of feminist therapy principles, goals, and techniques, including the hallmark techniques of gender-role socialization and power analysis.

Feminist analysis of gender-role socialization and power have been identified briefly in this chapter as being readily accomplished through the use of two hallmark techniques of music therapy--lyric analysis and songwriting. A careful examination of

these two specific techniques and their potential for feminist music therapy with abused women shall be the focus of the chapter which follows.

## **10. Feminist Music Therapy Techniques: A Closer Look**

While feminist therapy literature has often made elegant, metaphorical references to voices in music, this chapter shall explore the real potential of music itself to be an ideal medium for this feminist analysis of the silencing of women's voices, as well as for women's reclaiming of their own genuine voices. Attention will be given first to the representational power of music, then to the traditional male representation of women in music with lyrics and its effects, and then ultimately to women's subversion of this media to represent themselves, replacing the patriarchal view of women with their own self-defined view. The manner in which this subversion can be used--through the specific techniques of lyric analysis and songwriting--to empower abused women in feminist music therapy shall be examined.

### **Representational Power of Music**

Accumulative research has shown that, because of certain inherent characteristics, music can intensify emotional response to that which is represented in verbal or in visual media. As has been identified in the preceding chapter, music alone can elicit strong physiological and emotional responses (Unkefer, 1990). Background music has been shown to intensify affective response to TAT pictures (McFarland, 1984), to television

commercials (Wintle, 1978), to movies (Thayer & Levenson, 1983), and to paintings (Parrott, 1982). So too has the musical embedding of a verbal message been shown to intensify emotional response (Gfeller, 1990). Cooper (1985) contends that music is a "communication or sociological force that functions to persuade and to socialize" (p. 499). She further argues that popular music, with its simple and repetitive music and lyrics, can be particularly powerful in affirming a particular view of reality. Music with visual stimuli as well as lyrics (i.e., music videos) has also been shown to influence attitudes (Peterson & Pfost, 1989). In her analysis of MTV, Lewis (1990) concurs, arguing that rock videos are not only a music genre, but also an influential system of discourse which reflects and perpetuates societal attitudes.

Given that popular music, in audio and audiovisual format, can be powerfully influential, the question arises, "to what extent is it present in people's daily lives?" It would appear to be an increasingly integral part of the lives of many--particularly the youth. In 1985, popular music accounted for approximately 90% of all record sales, and 75% of all popular record sales were to those between 12 and 30 years of age; those attending high school or college listened to approximately 3 to 5 hours of popular music per day (Cooper, 1985). MTV, the original all-music video television channel, influences approximately 63% of its viewers in their purchase of specific records (Lewis, 1990). This channel, which started as a commercial venture, is now one of the most powerful selling tools ever. And, since the start of MTV, there has been a rise of a number of competitive all-music-video television channels trying to stake out their portion of the market--music videos for the *Generation X*, for *'baby boomers'*, for people of color, etc. Thus popular

music, in both audio and audiovisual formats, is very much a strong presence in the lives of many and this music has the potential to intensify response to the ideas represented in the lyrics and in the visual images. Clearly the manner in which women are represented in this media could also then have potential for significant impact in the lives of women and men.

## **Male Representation of Women**

The bulk of research concerning male representation of women in the media has involved the nonmusic mass media generally, and pornography specifically. In general terms, media images of women are constructed by men within a patriarchal system (Humm, 1989; Worell & Remer, 1992) and these images can strongly influence the ideas and attitudes of children and adults (Peres, 1990). Feminists contend that the representation of violence against women and its eroticization in the media produces undesirable social consequences (Edwards, 1987; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; St. Lawrence & Joyner, 1991), including the legitimization of rape (Hester, 1992): "Pornography is the theory and rape the practice" (Morgan, 1985, p. 131). Indeed, research has supported their belief that the media do present images of male domination of and male violence towards women and these images do adversely affect men's attitudes towards women, increasing their acceptance of violence against women, while decreasing their compassion for women victims (Lips, 1991; St. Lawrence & Joyner, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992).



While research has thus shown that pornography does promote negative (including rape-supportive) attitudes towards women, it has not, as yet, shown a definitive link between these attitudes and subsequent behavior (Lips, 1991). For some this failure can be explained as a result of difficulties in defining pornography, as a result of problems in differentiating between sexually-explicit and sexually-exploitative material, as a result of the necessity of laboratory rather than field studies, and as a result of the limited amount of exposure necessarily provided in laboratory studies. For others, this failure is not important, counterbalanced as it is by their intuitive belief in the link between mass media misogyny and real violence. In the words of former U. S. President, Richard Nixon, to the U.S. Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography:

The Commission contends that the proliferation of filthy books and plays has no lasting effects on a man's character. If that were true, it must also be true that great books, great paintings, and great plays have no ennobling effect's on man's conduct. Centuries of civilization and ten minutes of common sense tell us otherwise (Hester, 1992, p. 68-69).

Ultimately, regardless of whether or not pornography has been directly linked to rape, MacGregor-Davies (1988) maintains that "pornography, existing within a generally sexist mainstream media, has a near monopoly on sexual education and plays a major role in determining popular conception of what sexuality is" (p. 135). One of the most frequent lessons in this sexual education is the eroticization of women--the view of women solely as sex objects for men's pleasure (Burstow, 1992); its follow up lesson is the eroticization of violence--the view of male violence, power, and domination of women as integral and desirable parts of the sexual experience (Burstow, 1992; Edwards, 1987). These lessons

1987). These lessons are hard to recognize, let alone to refuse to learn: "We absorb these messages and ideologies unconsciously taking them in like the air we breathe" (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 235).

Although most of the attention and controversy has been focused on those messages involving violence against women in the mass media, recent attention has been directed towards other messages having a negative impact on women. Two of the most powerful of these are what Naomi Wolf (1991) calls the *'beauty myth'* and what I call the *'romance myth'*. While neither of these involves outright physical violence against women, they both have the potential to be equally, if not more, damaging for they involve emotional or inner violence (Bart, 1993; Bean, 1992; Wolf, 1991). The message of the beauty myth is that women's identity and value are premised upon their physical beauty and attractiveness to men. Yet this beauty is unattainable, for women are compared and compare themselves to the unrealistic standards set up by the beauty industry. The average model, dancer, or actress is taller and thinner than 95% of the female population (Wolf, 1991). The effect of this unrealistic standard is to decrease women's self-esteem (on an average day, 25% of women are on diets, 50% have just started, finished, or broken a diet, and 90% are dissatisfied with their weight) and to increase business for the cosmetics, hair, diet, and plastic surgery industries (Bean, 1992; Wolf, 1991). The message of the romance myth is that romance is to be desired above all other things by women and that it is defined for women as being desired, not as desiring. Both the beauty myth and the romance myth are products of male representation of women which work hand in hand to do violence to women's self-esteem.

While the majority of attention and controversy has been focused on violence and, to a lesser degree, other negative messages in pornography and nonmusic mass media, recently some attention has been directed towards the music media. As with pornography, the bulk of the research of the music media has supported the belief that music and music videos present images of male domination and male violence against women (Kane, 1984; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Wolf, 1991):

In music videos--many of which border on the margins of pornography--the violent imagery is dominated by white males with women portrayed as sexual objects who are often passive, subordinate, and submissive. When women are depicted as being in control, they are often portrayed as cold-hearted bitches. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993)

Music videos have been shown to be twice as violent as other television programs. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993), with 35% of the average 18 hourly instances of aggression on MTV depicting sexual violence against women (Kane, 1984). Miedzian (1991) and Wolf (1991) maintain that music lyrics and videos conform to pornography standards by eroticizing male violence against women and by defining female beauty as that which is not quite human and thus without the right to say no. Examples of this can be seen in any of a number of songs: in 2 Live Crew's *We Want Some Pussy*: ". . . [we take turns] waxin' girls behinds . . . the girl would say stop, I'd say I'm not . . . with my dick in my hands as you fall to your knees"; in 2 Live Crew's *Dick Almighty*: "He'll tear the pussy open, 'cause it's satisfaction . . . Dick so proudful, she'll kneel and pray . . . suck my dick bitch, it'll make you puke . . . "; in a song by rapper Eazy E: "I creaped on my bitch with my/Uzzi machine/went to the house and kicked down the door/unloaded like

hell . . . "; in Motley Crue's *Girls, Girls, Girls*: "These last few nights [the blade of the knife] turned and sliced you apart/Laid out cold, now we're both alone/But killing you helped me keep you home"; and in Ted Nugent's *Violent Love*: "Took her in the room with the mirrors on the walls/Showed her my brand new whip/Screamed as she started to slip/Give me a dose of your violent love" (Miedzian, 1991).

Research on the actual effect of this violent male representation of women in the music media on the subsequent attitudes and behavior of its listeners has been very limited and, to a degree, inconclusive. Peterson and Pfof (1989) found that of nonerotic nonviolent videos, erotic violent videos, and nonerotic violent videos, only the latter significantly increased aggressive attitudes in men towards women ( e.g., rape myth acceptance, interpersonal violence acceptance, adversarial sexual beliefs, and sex-role stereotypes). They hypothesized that this was the case perhaps because erotic videos produced sexual arousal rather than aggression. St, Lawrence and Joyner (1991) found that exposure to both heavy metal rock music with violent lyrics and that with Christian lyrics resulted in increased negative attitudes of men towards women. They hypothesized that the response to nonviolent Christian heavy metal music was a result of the greater acceptance of sexist and rape-supportive beliefs seen in those men in their study who had a more extrinsic religious orientation.

While this more recent research attempted to redress the previous neglect of the music media, it too tended to neglect an area of importance. In focusing almost exclusively on male violence against women in music, it overlooked the larger issue of the general sexism of popular music and its impact not only on men, but on women as well, Cooper

(1985), while not dealing with this issue in depth, did touch on it briefly. In an analysis of three decades of popular song lyrics, Cooper found that 90% to 100% were written by men and 96% contained stereotypic images of women. Cooper also found that, while there was a decreasing focus on women's helplessness and dependency on men, there was an increasing focus on women's physical characteristics (i.e., their beauty) and on their potential to be powerful and to be harmful to men.

In her analysis of MTV, Lewis (1990) looked at the larger issue of sexism in much greater depth, defining it in much broader terms. While music videos have been criticized for their sexual violence, Lewis identified a much more overarching sexism in MTV's targeting of adolescents for its audience and in its defining adolescence as exclusively male. In attempting to develop an audience, MTV created an ideology of rock which accepted patriarchal ideology of adolescence as a system of discourse which incorporates only male experience and activity. This discourse of adolescence includes increasing independence and access to the public sphere; that of femininity involves increasing restrictions to the private sphere and a rigid code of appearance and behavior. These ideologies of femininity, adolescence, and rock serve to reflect and perpetuate hegemonic relations of gender inequality. In exploring music videos in the light of this rock ideology, Lewis thus expanded the focus from a critique of sexual violence in music to a critique of overarching sexism, of the exclusion of women, and of coded images of the female body which position women as objects of male voyeurism and which restrict women to the private sphere.

## **Women's Representation of Women**

With the preponderance of research focused on male representation of women in music and its effects on men, the issue of women's representation of themselves in music was relatively neglected until Lewis' analysis of MTV (1990). In expanding the focus, Lewis (1990) was able to identify "acts of resistance and political struggle on the part of female musicians and female audiences" (p. 131). In response to MTV's male adolescent discourse, Lewis noted that female audiences became avid supports of the few women musicians on MTV, thus creating overnight stars. These women musicians established their own system of female address--music videos reflecting women's experiences of adolescence and gender. Women's music today continues to incorporate "symbolic discourse on the meaning of gender", encouraging reflection by female audiences on their own experiences of gender and inequality. This music challenges patriarchal assumptions by representing women gaining access to traditional male domains and by celebrating distinctly female experiences. Thus music videos can be not only a source of patriarchal discourse, but also a source for its subversion by women.

## **Exploring Women's Voices in Music Therapy**

Given its subversive potential, music would appear to be an ideal medium for a feminist analysis of gender-role socialization and of power--the cornerstone of feminist therapy, and subsequently of feminist music therapy. Analysis of the female address in music would allow women to hear the voices of other women, to validate their own experiences, to analyze patriarchal assumptions and practices, and to eventually challenge

the status quo. An analysis of women's lyrics from a feminist standpoint could show women the power of their voice. For, while traditional focus has been on the power of images and words in music to harm women, "why should we assume that words and images that make women seem less than human should be more magical than women's own words and images?" (Wolf, 1993, p. 105).

### **Feminist Lyric Analysis of Women's Songs**

The words and images of women in their own songs will be explored in this section. Songs have been selected which represent a variety of styles (e.g., rock, country, blues, alternative, etc.) and which deal with issues frequently addressed in feminist therapy with women in general, and with women survivors of male violence in particular. These issues include: violence, women's power and self-acceptance, power in intimate relationships, gender-role socialization, and recovery. While the songs have been organized according to general themes, it is important to note that songs, like the issues themselves, overlap such that any one song may touch on several issues.

### **Women's Voices on Violence**

As seen earlier in this dissertation, violence is an integral part of women's lives (whether it is actual violence or the fear of the possibility of violence which can cause women to modify their behavior--where they walk, with whom they talk, etc.). The prevalence of male violence against women ensures that it is frequently an issue of

importance in feminist therapy with any woman. It is of crucial importance for abused women.

In their song, *Hunted*, the Cowboy Junkies (Timmins, 1993) explore the issue of male violence against women in its many forms--rape, date rape, sexual harassment, murder, etc. While this song was written by a man--Michael Timmins--it is sung by his sister, for whom it was written. The atmosphere of this song, created through both the music and lyrics, is appropriately menacing as it explores the fact that, regardless of particular circumstances (e.g., single, married, divorced, at work, at home, etc.), every woman lives with the danger of male violence. This threat pervades women's lives: " . . . there are trap lines/running up and down Main Street/wire snares thirsting for your neck and feet . . . ". It causes women to rearrange their lives (" . . . she stays on well-travelled paths . . . ") and teaches women "what it's like to be hunted". Yet the irony is that, in the end, women must often turn to men for protection: "Quick to your phone dial 911/invite a strange man into your home/who'll be carrying a gun . . . " .



## Hunted

Emma's in a part of town  
where she doesn't recognize the streets  
named for famous sons  
and out of every crevice comes creeping  
a threat in her direction

Lucy's outside her home  
heading towards her corner store  
she stays on well travelled paths  
and is always making sure  
that she doesn't develop patterns

There are trap lines  
running up and down Main Street  
wire snares thirsting for your neck and feet

Susan doesn't like the way her curtains  
are blowing in the wind  
She swears she locked that window  
before she went out dancing  
She stands frozen in her doorway

Judy hears a sound coming from the other room  
She knows she should be alone  
'cause her kids left at noon  
to go visit their father

Quick to your phone dial 911  
invite a strange man into your home  
who'll be carrying a gun

Leslie's working late  
she's got a deadline to meet  
in walks her boss  
upon her desk he puts his feet  
and says alone at last

Reanne's got a new boyfriend  
and they're getting along  
until he locks the door and says don't struggle  
I'm stronger than you are

Just one question, I'm dying to ask you said  
do you know what it's like to be hunted?

Emma's in a part of town  
where she doesn't recognize the streets  
named for famous sons  
and out of every crevice comes creeping  
a threat in her direction

Do you know what it's like to be hunted?  
Do you know what it's like to be hunted?  
Do you know what it's like to be hunted?  
Do you know what it's like to be hunted?

The song *Boys' Club* (Parachute Club, 1983) also deals with the general issue of male violence, but on a more global level.

## Boys' Club

Boys' club, membership restricted to the boys' club  
Boys' club, women are not welcome to the boys'  
club

### Instrumental Interlude

Boys' club, fratricidal abandon in the boys' club  
Boys' club, you know they're gonna kill us, it's a  
boys' club  
Boys' club, ladies unescorted not welcome, it's a  
boys' club  
Boys' club, are you gonna take it, it's a boys' club

You take Poland, I'll take El Salvador  
You pretend you're making peace, but what you're  
really making is war  
Catch a falling star catch it before it hits the ground  
Fight unequal power, fight unequal safe and sound

You got your boys with toys making noise, trying to  
blow us up  
Political fame is the name of the game, they want to  
go right to the top  
You read it in your history books and seen it all  
before  
If we had our way, we'd get it right, we'd end this  
bloody war

You've been shaking it, faking it, taking us for a  
walk  
When's it gonna, when's it gonna, when's it gonna  
Stop?

C'mon you guys, give us a break  
I can't deal with this anymore

### Instrumental Interlude

Boys' Club, membership restricted to the boys' club  
Boys' Club, suicidal abandon in the boys' club  
Boys' Club, it's a White man's game, Boys' Club  
Boys' Club, they're meeting in the church on  
Sunday, Boys' Club  
Boys' Club, planning the next disaster, Boys' Club  
Boys' Club, you know they're gonna kill us  
Boys' Club, they never seem to learn, Boys' Club  
Boys' Club

In *Floorboard Blues*, the Cowboy Junkies (Timmins, 1993) explore the threat of violence from a stranger. The objectification of women which is a part of all male violence against women is referred to in their lyrics: "... as his eyes in the mirror reduce me to flesh and bones ...". The lyrics also indicate that all women are affected by the male violence against one woman, and that there is violence done to the inner spirit as well as that done to the body: "... 'cause that razor's not just a threat to me/He'll be slicing tiny crescents from your heart/without laying a sweaty palm to your cheek". The song finishes with words of personal and perhaps political resistance for they have the potential to resonate for all women: "It's a fucked up world but this ole girl/well she ain't giving in".

## Floorboard Blues

Check under his floorboards, Mama,  
I don't trust his silly grin  
He's got a beat-up Rambler, Nebraska plates,  
and I ain't getting in  
I don't like the way his pinky ring  
picks up the dashboard light  
or his short little piggy fingers  
or the way his belt is cinched too tight

Check under his floorboards, Mama,  
I don't like his suggestive tone  
The way his words drip from his mouth  
as he asks can I take you home?  
I don't care how many miles I got,  
I think I'd rather walk them alone  
than to sit in the back seat  
as his eyes in the mirror  
reduce me to flesh and bones

Check under his floorboards, Mama,  
'cause that razor's not just a threat to me  
He'll be slicing tiny crescents from your heart,  
Without laying a sweaty palm on your cheek  
Don't accuse me of running scared,  
listen to what I'm saying  
It's a fucked up world, but this ole girl  
well she ain't giving in.

In *A Priority*, Sweet Honey in the Rock (Kahlil & Cassel, 1991) use a rap style to touch on the whole gamut of issues involved in male violence against women: the connection between violence of individual men against individual women and systemic violence, the treatment of women in patriarchy, and the devaluation of women. They also identify the many contributions of women and the need for significant attitudinal change at both the individual and the systemic level to revalue women, to make them a priority.

## A Priority

### WOMEN!

Should be a priority, respected and upheld in society  
Given all the proper notoriety  
Never used or abused by authority figures  
Like the media that trashes us  
Play down the hype that constantly bashes our image  
TV, movies, and the videos  
Use women's bodies to create a sick side show  
Too many times seen as a sex symbol  
No real intelligence, just a brainless bimbo  
Not taken seriously, for who she needs to be  
A human being with the right to be free  
Not misinterpreted so much of the time  
A "no" means "yes" only in a man's mind

Women who struggle and shout, "Take back the night"  
Are often viewed by others in the wrong light  
The daily violence of rape, don't misconstrue  
It is a fact of life and it could happen to you  
You, you, you, YOU! Could be walking down the street  
A gang of miscreants you happen to meet  
High on drugs or whatever the case  
They pull a knife or hold a gun to your face  
You cry, "Yo! Yo! Yo! Can't you see I'm a MAN?"  
But they just laugh and get down with their funky scam  
You're left to wonder, "Can I still call myself a man?"  
Maybe the plight of women you can now understand  
Stand Stand Stand up!  
And check out herstory  
Correctly line and define our identity  
No more distortions, hear it in the true proportions  
Erase the guise of lies that has you 'dissin' me  
Check for our past and what we gave humanity  
LIFE! from the womb of creation  
Was born the earth, the mother of habitation  
Some call her Eve, others call her Lucy  
Some try to blame her for the problems of society  
But since we know that it was men who wrote the books  
Perhaps we need to re-examine, take another look

Look! into Africa  
The Black land they call Alkebulan  
Here is a story that teaches of our former glory  
Of queens and warriors  
Women strong and brave  
Refused to be subdued or taught how to behave  
The power within comes from God  
And should not be dictated by men  
Some ruled their nations sealed on a throne  
Some led in battle fighting to protect their homes  
Some study nature, the sciences of healing  
Religion and the arts reflect their deepest feelings

Music--the list is practically endless  
The contributions we have made are quite timeless  
In almost every category you will find us  
Singing--or playing instruments  
Upon the world we made our mark  
We make a serious dent  
We have influenced the sound  
We offer the soul that no where else can be found  
Touch inner feelings that are rich and profound

Words!--Let's talk about some writers  
Who used the pen and page as weapons of a fighter  
Educating to the poetry and prose  
Their essays and their novel and their stories that  
drove a message--with a rhythmical spear

Into our conscious minds  
To make us adhere to life  
And its realities  
Uncovering the clouds of mystery  
Creating hope of fulfilling Destiny

Check out the world  
Check out your nation  
Low respect for women is a  
No win situation  
We've got to raise it to an  
Up iration  
Keep your love for women  
On an Irie meditation  
'Cause the women are the teachers  
And the Healers of the land  
Y'all know what I'm saying  
So come on and take a stand  
To love and respect  
All women  
In your life  
Your mother and your sister  
And your daughter and your wife  
Your great grandmother  
Significant other  
And even all the women you don't  
Know from one another  
And the world's gonna be  
A whole better place  
But so much more important  
We may save the race!

so WOMEN!  
Should be a priority  
Respected and upheld in society  
Given all the proper notoriety  
Never used or abused by authority  
WOMEN! Should be a priority  
WOMEN! Should be a priority  
WOMEN! Should be a priority  
WOMEN! Should be a priority  
WOMEN! Should be a priority

The complex issue of woman abuse by intimate male partners is dealt with in a number of songs. In *Behind the Wall*, Tracy Chapman (1988) gives a stark and realistic look at the many problems facing abused women: the inadequacy of police response, the life-threatening nature of the abuse, the patriarchal view of it as a '*domestic violence*' rather than a crime, and the continuing nature of abuse. This continuing nature of abuse is seen in the very structure of the song which ends with a repetition of the first verse: "Last night I heard the screaming . . . the police/always come late/if they come at all".

#### Behind The Wall

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

And when they arrive  
They say they can't interfere  
With domestic affairs  
Between a man and his wife  
And as they walk out the door  
The tears well up in her eyes

Last night I heard the screaming  
Then a silence that chilled my soul  
I prayed that I was dreaming  
When I saw the ambulance in the road  
And the policeman said  
I'm here to keep the peace  
Will the crowd disperse  
I think we all could use some sleep

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

The song *She Sits on the Table* (Paxton, 1988) further elaborates on the institutional violence abused women face when they attempt to seek help--the failures of

the medical and law enforcement professions which make it impossible for women to leave abusive situations and then ultimately blame women when they do not. The lyrics also reflect many of the conflicting emotions facing women abused by the men they love--the fear, the shame, the love, and the hope for change.

#### She Sits on the Table

She sits on the table in a dress of paper  
diplomas all over the wall  
One university, one school of medicine  
She's overwhelmed by it all

The nurses, all sympathy, voice of experience  
Let's have a look at that eye  
It's going to look bad for a week, maybe more  
Go on darling it's all right to cry

How can I leave him she is crying  
What could I do, where would I go?  
He didn't mean it, he will change some day  
Oh God How he used to love me so

The doctor is busy, his manner professional  
She finds she must look at the floor  
He looks at her eye, at her ribs and her arm  
And it seems every last inch is sore

The doctor is handsome, he smells of cologne  
He speaks disapprovingly  
What did you do to deserve such a beating from him?

The policeman is waiting outside in the corridor  
He speaks to her as a child  
He's friends with her husband, he's angry with her  
And he asks if there'll be charges filed

She says she's not sure, she needs time to recover  
She feels beaten down and disgraced  
The policeman asks isn't she secretly glad  
For a man who'll keep her in place

How can I leave him she is crying  
What could I do, where would I go?  
He didn't mean it, he will change some day  
Oh God How he used to love me so  
He didn't mean it, he will change some day  
Oh God, how he used to love me so.

#### The song, *Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning*, (Timmins, 1990)

highlights the conflicting emotions for women leaving abusive relationships. While abusive relationships are characterized by violence, they are also characterized by moments of genuine love. Subsequently, leaving is not easy and may result in genuine grief over the loss of this love as well as the loss of a way of life, of security, and of stability. The song identifies the many little ways--both good and bad--in which leaving will change a woman's life. The song concludes that in the long run, however, leaving is for the best as

violence is unacceptable:

Sure I'll admit there are times when I miss you/especially like now when I need  
someone to hold me/but there are some things that can never be forgiven/ and I've  
got to tell you that I kind of like this extra few feet in my bed.

Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning

Sun comes up, it's Tuesday morning  
hits me straight in the eye  
guess you forgot to close the blind last night  
Oh, that's right, I forgot, It was me  
I sure do miss the smell of black coffee in the  
morning  
the sound of water splashing all over the bathroom,  
the kiss that you would give me even though I was  
sleeping,  
but I kind of like the feel of this extra few feet in my  
bed

Telephone's ringing, but I don't answer it  
'cause everybody knows that good news always  
sleeps 'til noon  
Guess it's tea and toast for breakfast again  
maybe I'll add a little TV too.  
No milk! God how I hate that.  
Guess I'll go to the corner and get breakfast from  
Jenny.  
She's got a black eye this morning, *Jen how'd ya get  
it?* She says, *Last night, Bobby got a little bit out of  
hand*

Lunchtime I start to dial your number  
then I remember so I reach for something to smoke  
Anyways, I'd rather listen to Coltrane  
than go through all that shit again.  
There's something about an afternoon spent doing  
nothing

Just listening to records and watching the sun  
falling.  
Thinking of things that don't have to add up to  
something  
And this spell won't be broken  
by the sound of keys scraping in the lock  
Maybe tonight it's a movie  
with plenty of room for elbows and knees  
a bag of popcorn all to myself,  
black and white with a strong female lead  
and if I don't like it, no debate, I'll leave  
Here comes that feeling that I'd forgotten  
how strange these streets can feel at night  
Each pair of eyes just filled with suggestion.  
So I lower my head, make a beeline for home  
seething inside  
Funny, I'd never noticed  
the sound the streetcars make as they pass my  
window  
which reminds me, I forgot to close the blind again.  
Sure I'll admit there are times when I miss you  
especially like now when I need someone to hold me  
but there are some things that can never be forgiven  
and I've just got to tell you  
that I kind of like this extra few feet in my bed

The issue of the difficulty in, yet the absolute necessity of, leaving is also addressed  
in a country song by Trisha Yearwood (1992)--*The Nearest Distant Shore*: " . . . The one  
you swore to love is pulling you down . . . Swim to the nearest distant shore/There's only  
so much a heart can endure".

### Nearest Distant Shore

You fight for every breath  
caught without a ship in this sea of neglect  
The one you swore to love is pulling you down  
You're in over your head  
Chilled to the bone by the waters you've tread  
Chart a course to land before your drown

Chorus:  
Swim to the nearest distant shore  
There's only so much a heart can endure  
You gave it your best, forgive yourself  
You can't hold on anymore  
It's not as far as it might seem  
Now it's time to let go of old dreams  
Every heart for itself  
Swim to the nearest distant shore

He said for you he'd change  
Then he let you down and watch you take the blame  
You vowed you would not fail  
But this ain't success, it's a living hell  
There's nothing left to lose, you're already alone

Chorus:  
Swim to the nearest distant shore  
There's only so much a heart can endure  
You gave it your best, forgive yourself  
You can't hold on anymore  
It's not as far as it might seem  
Now it's time to let go of old dreams  
Every heart for itself  
Swim to the nearest distant shore

While the issue of woman abuse by intimate male partners is only one of many dealt with in the song which follows by Tracy Chapman, she does raise the question that plagues many abused women: *Why?* (Chapman, 1988). This question is a crucial one, for only in learning to look for external answers, rather than internal ones, can women begin their recovery. This applies to the question, "Why is he abusing me?" as well as to the later question, "Why didn't I leave sooner?". Many abused women, as well as those trying to help, blame these women for failing to leave; as seen previously, a feminist analysis shows that everything in the abused woman's world (e.g., institutional response, gender-role socialization, social expectations, etc.) makes it next to impossible to leave. The sixth verse of this song is also important for it addresses the issue of breaking the silence about abuse: " . . . the time is coming soon/when the blind remove their blinders/and the speechless speak the truth".



### Why?

Why do the babies starve  
When there's enough food to feed the world  
Why when there're so many of us  
Are there people still alone

Why are the missiles called peace keepers  
When they're aimed to kill  
Why is a woman still not safe  
When she's in her home

Love is hate  
War is peace  
No is yes  
And we're all free

But somebody's gonna have to answer  
The time is coming soon  
Amidst all these questions and contradictions  
There're some who seek the truth

But somebody's gonna have to answer  
The time is coming soon  
When the blind remove their blinders  
And the speechless speak the truth

Incest is another area of male violence against women which might need to be addressed in therapy. This topic has been dealt with in a number of popular songs. In *Where Are You?*, Wilson-Phillips (1992) explore a number of common responses of adult women dealing with childhood incest: the devastation of incest, the betrayal, the pain of keeping the secret, and the dissociation sometimes used to cope with the pain. The start of the healing process can be seen towards the end of the song where it moves from the second person singular (e.g., "You don't have to look out anymore") to the first person singular--"I don't have to look out that window anymore/I can just come back to myself--I can come back to this world".

## Where Are You?

I'm all grown up--but somehow--it feels like I'm  
pretending  
The visions of my younger years--they are buried  
But the scenes that play inside of me--are impending  
They are never ending  
Where, where, where, where, Where are you?  
You don't have to look out that window--anymore  
You can come back to yourself--You can come back  
to the world  
Where are you? Tell me who heard you? And  
where are you?  
He led me into his room--and he had me lay down  
My heart and soul--and anything else that you could  
own  
When you're 6 years old  
But now I'm older

Where, where, where, where, Where are you?  
You don't have to look out that window--anymore  
You can come back to yourself--You can come back  
to the world  
Where are you? Tell me who heard you? And  
where are you?  
Such a quiet secret--it hurt too much trying hard to  
keep it  
Oh and I looked up to you--I wanted so much to  
believe in you  
I wanted so much for you to believe in me  
Oh I tried--I try  
But where, where, where, where, Where are you?  
I don't have to look out that window--Anymore  
I can just come back to myself--I can come back to  
this world  
Where are you? Tell me who hurt you--And where  
are you now?  
Where are you? Where are you? Where are you?  
Tell me who hurt you?

The issue of incest is also dealt with in the ballad, *Little Spirit Keeper*, by Linda Allen (n.d.). Allen describes the impact of incest throughout an entire lifetime--the responses at the time of incest, as well as the long-lasting wounds to happiness and intimacy in adult life. This song also deals with the dissociation brought on by the trauma of incest: In singing to the "little child of wonder", the singer is talking to herself as a child.

### Spirit Keeper

Little spirit keeper, little child of wonder  
Many years have come and gone  
Trembling little shoulders, called to be much older  
How can I reach you with my song?

You were four years old and the story's an old one  
Your father touched you, made you promise not to tell  
How can I tell you that your body's all your own  
Tiny girl so alone

Then you were seven and your father's game continued  
Bought you pretty things, but he hurt you just the same  
How can I tell you there are those around who can  
Little girl so alone

Little spirit keeper, little child of wonder  
Many years have come and gone  
Trembling little shoulders, called to be much older  
How can I reach you with my song?

When you were nine years old, your secret weighed so heavy  
Tried to be perfect just to hide your secret shame  
He called you little tease, but child you're not to blame  
Precious child so alone

You were eleven, how you longed to tell your mother  
You thought she'd hate you for she loved your father so  
Cut off from her and you couldn't risk close friends  
Silent child so alone

Little spirit keeper, little child of wonder  
Many years have come and gone  
Trembling little shoulders, called to be much older  
How can I reach you with my song?

At sixteen years you finally lifted up your head  
Said you'd call the cops and you threw him from your bed  
Thought it was over but a sister was still home  
And the child so alone

Now many years have passed and the shadows linger on  
All the midnight lovers, all the heartaches left at dawn  
Can we heal each other, little girl and woman grown  
Frightened children, you and I

Little spirit keeper, little child of wonder  
Many years have come and gone  
Trembling little shoulders, called to be much older  
How can I reach you with my song?  
How can I reach you with my song?

In *Kids' Fears* (Indigo Girls, 1989), the reference to incest is much more subtle, leaving the task of interpretation to the individual listener, based on their own experience, of kids' fears, secrets, and pain from pearls.

#### Kids' Fears

Pain from pearls...hey little girl...  
How much have you grown?  
Pain from pearls. hey little girl  
Flower for the ones you've known

Are you on fire  
From the years?  
What would you give for your  
kid fears?

Secret staircase, running high  
You had a hiding place  
Secret staircase, running low  
But they all know, now you're inside

Are you on fire  
From the years?  
What would you give for your  
kid fears?

Skipping stones, we know the price now  
Any sin will do  
How much further, if you can spin  
How much further if you are smooth

Are you on fire  
From the years?  
What would you give for your  
kid fears?

#### Bridge

Replace the rent with the stars above  
Replace the need with love  
Replace the anger with the tide  
Replace the ones, the ones, the ones that you love

#### Bridge

Are you on fire  
From the years?  
What would you give for your  
kid fears?

#### Bridge

A number of songs, rather than referring to specific forms of violence, refer simply to a common response of such trauma--distancing oneself from one's feelings or dissociation. K. D. Lang (1992) uses both lyrics and music extremely effectively in *Outside Myself* (Lang, 1992) to re-create the experience of being emotionally cut off from oneself.

### Outside Myself

A thin ice  
Covers my soul  
My body's frozen and my heart is cold  
And still  
So much about me is raw  
I search for a place to thaw

Something in me  
Broods love into fear  
It veils my vision leaves my thoughts  
Unclear  
My eyes  
From blue turn to grey  
Hoping to mask what they say

I've been outside myself for so long  
Any feeling I had is close to gone  
I've been outside myself for so long

I have been  
In a storm of the sun  
Basking senseless to what I've become  
A fool to worship just light  
When after all, it follows night

I've been outside myself for so long  
Any feeling I had is close to gone  
I've been outside myself for so long

I've been outside myself for so long  
Any feeling I had is close to gone  
I've been outside myself for so long so---

I've been outside myself for so long  
Any feeling I had is close to gone  
I've been outside myself for so long

In *Four A.M.*, Cathy Miller (1988) sings of a time in the past when she created an imaginary safe place to which she could retreat. She faces a dilemma, for she is no longer able to reach that place; she must find, like all women recovering from male abuse, her own personal power in the real world.

### Four A.M.

Early in the morning, just before dawn  
I would dream of waking in a place I could be strong  
I'd go there in the bad times when I could take no more  
When I was lost and frightened and the dreams could make me whole

I grew up with this vision and many tears it saved  
And as the years grew longer I hoped it would not fade  
My tears are still here with me though many years have fled  
And I have not the vision to see what's up ahead

When darkness takes my reason and keeps me from my health  
I reach out for my power, I reach out for myself  
But in the years I've travelled so far away from home  
My dream did not come with me and I am left alone.

Success in moving beyond the need to block one's feelings is seen in *Tearing the Veil* by Parachute Club (1986). They sing of successfully tearing the veil which blocks emotions and of reclaiming their soul.

#### Tearing the Veil

Now as I look around  
I'm beginning to see for the very first time  
How did I let my heart go so low?  
I need to claim what I know to be mine  
It's no secret that we move in a circle  
Wearing the masks of our doubt  
Here I be taking it step by step  
All I know is that I got to keep on

Movin' on with my life  
Tearing the veil  
Movin' on with my life  
Movin' on  
Tearing the veil

I used to bury my emotions  
Tears of rage behind the veil  
Now all I know is I got to see all the mystery  
Another soul who makes their way back home  
I go where the pull is the strongest  
That's where I know that I'll belong  
But here I be taking it step by step  
All I know is that I got to keep on

Movin' on with my life  
Tearing the veil  
Movin' on with my life  
Movin' on  
Tearing the veil  
Instrumental Interlude

Movin' on with my life---

Now as I look around  
I'm tearing the veil  
And now as I look inside  
I'm tearing the veil  
I've been looking inside, trying hard not to hide  
And I'm tearing the veil  
(tearing the veil)  
Looking insider, I'm trying hard not to hide  
Lifting the veil

(Can you catch me now?)  
Catch me, take a look at my eyes  
Tearing the veil  
Watch me now, watch me now  
(movin' on)  
Tearing the veil  
movin' on with my life  
Tearing the veil  
Catch me now, catch me now  
I'm movin' on  
I'm tearing the veil

### Women's Voices on Power and Self-Acceptance

The topic of women's power, and women's empowerment, is addressed in a general way in *Rise Up* (Parachute Club, 1992). The encouragement to women in the song changes from one of acknowledging power to that of using it.

## Rise Up

Rise up, rise up, Oh rise and see your power  
Rise up, rise up, We're dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, Time for celebration  
Rise up, rise up, Spirit's time has come

We want loving and laughter again  
We want heart beat, want madness to end  
We want dancing, want to run in the streets  
We want freedom to live it as peace

We want power, want to make it okay  
Want to be singing at the end of the day  
Children to breathe a new life  
We want freedom to love who we please

Rise up, rise up, Oh rise and see your power  
Rise up, rise up, Everybody's dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, It's time for celebration  
Rise up, rise up, The spirit's time has come

Talking 'bout the right time to be working for peace  
Wanting all the tensions in the world to ease  
We want to love, run wild in the streets  
We want to be free, We want to be free

Talking 'bout a new way, talking 'bout changing our  
names  
Talking 'bout building the land of our dreams  
This tight rope's got to learn how to bend  
We're making plans, gonna start out again

Rise up, rise up. Oh rise and show your power  
Rise up, rise up, Everybody's dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, Everybody's celebrating in the sun  
Rise up, rise up, Spirit's time has come  
Rise up now

(Instrumental interlude)

It's time, it's time, it's time

Rise up, rise up, Oh rise and show your power  
Rise up, rise up, We're dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, We're dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, Everybody's time has come, Spirit's  
time has come  
Spirit's time has come

Rise up, rise up, Rise and show your power  
Rise up, rise up, Oh dancing to the sun  
Rise up, rise up, It's time for celebration  
Rise up, rise up, The spirit's time has come,  
Woman's time has come  
Spirit's time has come

Related to the goal of empowerment is that of developing a positive internal source of self-esteem and self-acceptance. This issue is addressed in *I'll Love Myself* by Joyce and Jacque (1990). This quiet, contemplative song speaks effectively of self-acceptance in spite of imperfection and lack of love or acceptance from others. This can be a difficult task for many women growing up in patriarchy. This song also addresses the issue of being able to love oneself first, as a prerequisite to loving others. This too can be difficult in a culture where women are taught the importance of being part of a couple and of being selfless in their relationships: "I'll love myself . . . and then I'll love you".

### I'll Love Myself

I'll love myself when no one else will love me  
I'll love myself when people call me a son of a ...  
If they only knew, they'd love me too  
You'd love me, you'd love me too

I'll love myself when it seems I'm the only one  
I'll love myself when I've let down my friends and  
my family too  
Trying to be me can sometimes get me lonely

But I'll keep on, I'll hold on to my wildest dreams  
My crazy schemes, my fiery side, my sad shy eyes  
My extra size, my sensitive vibes, my joking lies  
I'll get out of that hole, I'll stand and be bold  
I'll reach my goals, my infinite dreams and I'll love  
myself  
I'll love myself, I'll love myself, I'll love myself  
And then I'll love you

*Constant Craving* by K. D. Lang (1992) speaks of personal strength: "Even  
through the darkest phase/ Be it thick or thin/ Always someone marches brave/ Here  
beneath my skin". The source of the '*constant craning*' is left rather ambiguous, open to  
the listener's own interpretation.

### Constant Craving

Even through the darkest phase  
Be it thick or thin  
Always someone marches brave  
Here beneath my skin

Constant craving  
Has always been

Maybe a great magnet pulls  
All souls towards the truth  
Or maybe it's life itself  
That feeds wisdom  
To its youth

Constant craving  
Has always been

Craving  
Ah ha  
Constant craving  
Has always been  
Has always been

Constant craving  
Has always been  
Constant craving  
Has always been

Craving  
Ah ha  
Constant craving  
Has always been  
Has always been  
Has always been  
Has always been  
Has always been  
Has always been



*A Woman's Anger* by Heather Bishop (1988) and *The Ballad of a Welfare Mother* by Linda Allen (1988) are two ballads which tell tales of women with sufficient self-confidence and freedom to express their anger in the face of unjust situations. Anger can be a difficult emotion for many women not only because of self-esteem problems, but also because of women's strong socialization to be nice, never angry (Wolf, 1993). *A Woman's Anger* is a reaction to sexual harassment.

#### A Woman's Anger

Working everyday I'm middle aged and I'm a  
damned good machinist  
I love my trade but there's only one thing that makes  
it hard to take  
The guy next to me is feeling mighty mean and he's  
wishing that I weren't here  
And he's got plans just to get me in the back room  
And show me what a woman's really good for

Hey buddy what you're looking at now is a woman's  
anger  
Boys what you're seeing right here is a woman's  
pride  
And if you had a lick of sense you would realize you  
could learn from me  
Turn your head around, you'd be a better man, and  
change you, you might see

They says he's my friend, he always mentions how  
he had to stick his neck out to get me this job  
When the boys come around, take a look at this  
place  
He always brings 'em by and then he shows me off  
The papers came through to say that I'm a level 2  
apprentice, only 2 years to go  
Instead of shaking my hand, he just slapped me on  
Then said, "Baby, do you think you're gonna make  
it?"

Hey buddy what you're looking at now is a woman's  
anger  
Boys what you're seeing right here is a woman's  
pride  
And if you had a lick of sense you would realize you  
could learn from me  
Turn your head around, you'd be a better man, and  
change you, you might see  
Turn your head around  
Hey buddy what you're looking at now is a woman's  
anger  
Boys what you're seeing right here is a woman's  
pride  
And if you had a lick of sense you would realize you  
could learn from me  
Turn your head around, you'd be a better man, and  
change you, you might see  
Turn your head around  
You'd be a better man and change you, you might  
see  
I said buddy what you're looking at now is a  
woman's anger

In *The Ballad of a Welfare Mother*, the woman's anger is in response to institutional violence. As mentioned previously, one of the major barriers to women leaving abusive situations is the failure of social services to provide prompt, effective and

sensitive service. Poverty is cause for genuine fear for many women, as seen in the increasing feminization of poverty.

Ballad of a Welfare Mother

She stood on the pavement holding a rock  
She stood on the pavement still  
She stood on the pavement and hurled the rock  
At Welfare's window sill

The rock it barely made a dent  
That's from a Welfare bum  
Who's tired of saying thanks for a loaf  
And only getting a crumb

She stood on the pavement holding a rock  
She stood on the pavement like one harassed  
She stood on the pavement and hurled the rock  
It bounced off the Welfare glass

You hold up my check again and again  
And you don't give a damn  
If my kids are hungry and broke  
While it's steak for my ex old man

She paced on the pavement holding a rock  
She paced like one attacked  
She stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock  
And watched the window crack

You sneer at me, sneer at my kids  
When we buy food with stamps  
But you never sneer at him  
Each night when he goes out to dance

She paced on the pavement holding a rock  
While her sweat poured out like rain  
She stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock  
It shattered the window pane

The judge awarded the kids to me  
My man was to pay support  
But you protect the men who run  
And the children are the victims in court

A crowd rushed out on the pavement  
Backing off as she took aim  
One brick in each hand and she hurled them  
right through the window pane

You sneer at the holes in our shoes and clothes  
And rip off each dime I make  
And shut the doors of school in my face  
Then tell me to like my fate

How's it feel to have holes in you for a change  
She shouted through the broken glass  
And the crowd on the pavement yelled with her  
Up your bureaucratic ass

The sirens in the distance come closer  
Two cops shoved her aside  
What have you done they snarled at her  
A moral act she cried

They say she laughed in the jail house  
And sang the whole night long  
While the people gathered outside  
And recalled the day in song

How she paced the pavement  
Holding a rock while her sweat poured like rain  
Then stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock  
And shattered the window pane

*Bitch With a Bad Attitude* (Adegabalola, n.d.) is a blues song of subversion. It subverts the patriarchal proscriptions for women to be self-sacrificing and nice, never angry. It does so in a powerful, yet good-humored fashion. It starts with the first line taken from *I Will Always Love You* (a traditional song exhorting women to be self-

sacrificing in their intimate relationships with men) but then goes on to completely contradict this original message--to portray a woman as boldly expressing her anger, getting revenge, and indeed taking pride in the label *'bitch'* (previously a label used to punish women for failing to be nice).

#### Bitch with a Bad Attitude

If I should stay, I'd just be in the way  
If I should stay, I'd just be in the way  
So I'm going to stay right here and I'm going to make you pay

I'm going to call up the cops tell 'em where you keep your stash  
Gonna call up your Momma tell her when you took her cash  
Gonna take the teeth I bought let you chew it with your gums  
You wanted some excitement, well I've only just begun

What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
I'm kicking ass and taking names  
What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude, bad attitude  
bad attitude

I'm going to call the IRS, tell 'em you had zero dependents  
I've been saving it for Oprah, I'm going to tell it with a vengeance  
Get your mastercard from your mistress to pay for a psychic friend  
Who'll tell you in the future that my vengeance has no end

What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
Better for me to be pissed off than pissed on  
What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
bad attitude, bad attitude

I'm going to stare you in the eye  
I'm gonna keep my lips shut tight  
Gonna call up your job and hang up just for spite  
Oh I will not be violent, that's much too good for you  
Lorena will look like an angel before I'm through

What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean I'm not out to get you  
What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
bad attitude, bad attitude

I'm going to keep my attitude, yes I'm really feeling fine  
You know you sold a lot of bad seeds, now it's harvest time, And you got a bumper crop coming in  
I said you sold a lot of bad seeds, now it's harvest time

What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
What you've got baby is a bitch with a bad attitude  
bad attitude  
What you've got baby is a bitch

### **Women's Voices on Power in Intimate Relationships**

In *Sexual Intelligence*, Parachute Club (1992) address another goal area of feminist therapy--the development of intimate relationships characterized by mutuality and

equality. The lyrics highlight the difficulty facing women and men in intimate relationships, where both are socialized to believe in the stereotypes of femininity, masculinity, and nonegalitarian marriages.

#### Sexual Intelligence

He learned the rules as a normal boy	Facing each other's pain
She learned them too	Choosing to try again
but they weren't the same	Talking about new values
He learned how to fight	Building up confidence
He learned how to win	Sexual Intelligence
She learned how to smile and to stand there by him	On the way to self respect
	They were just typical people
	No longer in a myth
They called it common sense	
They grew up so different	We're gonna dream of when
They were the typical children	In friendship we walk hand in hand
Livin' in a myth	To know each other well
	We seek to find
We're gonna dream of when	Intelligence
In friendship we walk hand in hand	Sexual Intelligence
To know each other well	
We look to find	We're gonna dream of when
Intelligence	In friendship we walk hand in hand
	To know each other well
As they grew up, they would realize	We seek to find
They learned it too young	Intelligence
They learned it too well	Sexual Intelligence
Now wearing the costumes of man and wife	
They couldn't see the sense	We're gonna dream of when
They were caught up in the difference	In friendship we walk hand in hand
They were the typical lovers	To know each other well
Watching love's goodbye	We seek to find
	Intelligence
We're gonna dream of when	Sexual Intelligence
In friendship we walk hand in hand	
We will begin again	We're gonna dream of when
We look to find	In friendship we walk hand in hand
Intelligence	To know each other well
	We seek to find
The world that they lived in	Intelligence
Had turned them both around	Sexual Intelligence (fade)
The fear they felt inside	
Whoa----	
Instrumental Interlude	

This same issue of egalitarian relationships is addressed by Parachute Club (1992) in another song--*Equal/Equally*:

## Equal/Equally

I saw the writing on the wall  
It said equal/equally  
The call to understanding  
No more silence, no  
I'd do anything/anything to see my world  
Equal/Equally

People look for signs to point the way  
Never taking on their lives and dreams  
Seems to be a shakedown  
Going on/going on/oh  
So where's the unity?  
I'd give anything/anything/anything to see this world  
Equal/Equally

I wanna be equal/equally  
I wanna feel equal/equally  
I wanna live equal/equally, I wanna live  
I wanna live/yeah!

Trouble in the world for too long now  
We could use some trust again  
Let's paint another picture  
It's a common ground  
Can't we see what we are doing to each other/in the  
name of  
Equal/Equally

I wanna feel equal/equally  
I wanna feel equal/equally  
I wanna give equal/equally  
I wanna live/I wanna live yeah, yeah, yeah  
I wanna be equal/equally  
I wanna live equal/equally  
It's gotta be equal/equally  
I wanna live/I wanna live, yeah, yeah, yeah

Where's the balance in this heart?  
Take a step now  
Don't stop before you start  
No one-sided love for me  
A way of living  
A way of giving  
There may never be another chance to see so clearly

I wanna walk together/side by side  
I want to be part of a love that lives  
No, not half of a dream that died  
I'd give anything/anything to see this world  
Anything/anything to see this world  
Equal/Equally

I wanna live equal/equally  
I wanna feel equal/equally  
It's gotta be equal/equally  
I wanna live/I wanna live, yeah, yeah, yeah  
I wanna live equal/equally  
I wanna feel equal/equally  
I wanna give equal/equally  
I wanna live, I wanna live, yeah, yeah, yeah

It's gotta be equal/equally  
I wanna be equal/equally  
I wanna live equal/equally  
I wanna live, I wanna love, yeah, yeah, yeah  
I wanna be equal/equally  
I wanna live equal/equally  
I wanna live, I wanna live, yeah, yeah, yeah

Women's and men's socialization process begins so young that sometimes it is extremely difficult to be aware of patriarchal assumptions about femininity, masculinity, and intimacy, let alone to challenge them. In *I Like 'Em Big and Stupid*, Julie Brown (1987) spoofs some of these patriarchal assumptions, thus providing a more lighthearted opportunity to deal with the issue in therapy.

I Like 'Em Big and Stupid

When I need something to help me unwind  
I find a 6-foot baby with a one-track mind  
Smart guys are nowhere, they make demands  
Give me a moron with talented hands  
I go bar-hopping and they say last call  
I start shopping for a Neanderthal

The bigger they come, the harder I fall  
In love 'til we're done, then they're out in hall

I like 'em big and stupid  
I like 'em big and real dumb  
I like 'em big and stupid

What kind of guy does a lot for me?  
Superman with a lobotomy  
My father's out of Harvard, my brother's out of Yale  
Well the guy I took home last night  
Just got out of jail

The way he grabbed and threw me, ooo it really got  
me hot  
But the way he growled and bit me I hoped he'd had  
his shots

The bigger they are the harder they'll work  
I got a soft spot for a good-looking jerk

I like 'em big and stupid  
I like 'em big and real dumb  
I like 'em big and stupid

Instrumental Interlude

I met a guy who drives a truck  
He can't tell time but he sure can drive  
I asked his name and he had to think  
Could I have found the missing link?  
He's so stupid, you know what he said?  
Well I forgot what he said 'cause it was so stupid

The bigger they come, the harder I fall  
In love 'til we're done then they're out in the hall

I like 'em big and stupid  
I like 'em big and real dumb  
I like 'em big and stupid

She likes 'em big and stupid  
She likes 'em big and real dumb  
She likes 'em big and real stupid

*Annie's Blues* (Rabson, 1990) represents another light-hearted attempt to challenge the stereotypical roles of women and men in traditional relationships in patriarchy.

### Annie's Blues

Don't wanna be nobody's woman  
Don't wanna be nobody's wife  
Don't wanna be nobody's woman  
Don't wanna be nobody's wife  
I just wanna take care of Annie all of the rest of my life

Well I don't wanna take care of no one  
Don't need no one to take care of me  
I don't wanna take care of no one  
Don't need no one to take care of me  
Well I'm tired of being your nursemaid  
I believe I'm gonna set you free

I'm gonna throw you out of here  
I'm gonna change all the locks  
Just 'cause I'm tired of cooking your meals  
and scrubbing all your socks  
I will not be your baby no matter what you do  
I'll take care of Annie and you take care of you

I don't wanna be nobody's woman  
Don't wanna be nobody's wife  
I just wanna take care of Annie all of the rest of my life

I like 'em old, I like 'em young  
I like 'em short, I like 'em tall  
I like 'em old, I like 'em young  
I like 'em short, I like 'em tall  
But if I have to stick to one man  
I'll take no one man at all

Well you can rock me sugar  
Rock me all night long  
Well you can rock me pretty poppa  
Rock me all night long  
But if you think that you can own me  
You know you got the whole thing wrong

Well gather round me sisters  
I'll tell you all the news  
Well gather round me sisters  
I'll tell you all the news  
You don't have to stick to one man  
to drive away your empty bed blues

Don't wanna be nobody's woman  
Don't wanna be nobody's wife  
Don't wanna be nobody's woman  
Don't wanna be nobody's wife  
I just wanna take care of Annie all of the rest of my life

### Women's Voices on Further Issues of Gender-Role Socialization

Tracy Chapman (1989) looks at some of the difficulties arising from women's socialization in *Women's Work* (Chapman, 1989). While the role of mother and housewife is valuable, it is not truly valued in our culture. As well, lack of time is one of the most common and serious complaints of women in our culture, including the '*superwomen*' who are discovering that combining work, family, and a personal life is not so easily accomplished.

### Woman's Work

Early in the morning she rises  
The woman's work is never done  
And it's not because she don't try  
She's fighting a battle with no one on her side

She rises up in the morning  
And she works 'til way past dusk  
The woman better slow down  
Or she's gonna come down hard  
Early in the morning she rises  
The woman's work is never done

In *This Girl I Knew*, Jane Siberry (1981) deals humorously with another issue in women's socialization--the overemphasis on women's physical attributes. Issues of beauty and weight can cause problems for women in a culture in which they can never be too beautiful or too thin and where current beauty standards are almost impossible to attain naturally. Jane Siberry also explores patriarchy's view of beauty and intelligence as mutually exclusive for women. Despite this, women are socialized to desire both beauty and a man at all costs.



### This Girl I Knew

All I said was why are you so fat  
If you don't want to be and all that  
No big deal--I just want to know

Mind your own business--no I don't mean you  
It's the table over there  
I think they think I'm being rude  
I'm not being rude--I just want to know

Then she said--you know  
I'm gonna lose a lot of weight some day  
I'll get some new clothes  
I'll change my style  
I'll meet a lot of men  
I'll have a lot of dates  
I'll discriminate  
I'll have a lot of fun  
I'll get myself together

And then I said--why not do it now  
If you really want to be and all that  
No big deal--I just want to know

Mind your own business--no I don't mean you  
It's the table over there  
I think they think I'm being rude  
I'm not being rude--I just want to know

Then she said--you know  
I'm gonna lose a lot of weight some day  
I'll get some new clothes  
I'll change my style  
I'll cut my hair  
I'll dye it too  
I'll meet a lot of men  
And I'll have a lot of dates  
I'll get myself together

And then she leaned over to me  
And she said this is gonna sound weird  
But the reason I don't do it now  
Is I have this crazy fear  
That I wouldn't know what to do  
If a man thought I was sexy or something  
(...supposed to throw away my career and hop into  
bed or something...)  
And then she leaned back  
And I leaned back  
And we didn't say very much after that

### Women's Voices of Hope and Recovery

As important as a realistic analysis of the barriers facing women is, so too is an analysis of women's power, women's current achievements, and women's ability to overcome barriers. In *Small Victories*, the Parachute Club (1992) acknowledges the importance of and the achievement in small steps.

## Small Victories

I wish I could write  
Between the lines  
I wish I could say what's on my mind  
I wish I could bring the world  
Inside of me  
These feelings that hold me  
Just don't seem to let me go  
I keep picking up the pieces  
Oh I feel alone

Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps

As I look upon my life  
I often wonder why  
We try so hard to make the perfect lie  
Build our heroes up in time to watch them fall  
The fear that we carry  
Will hold us in a disguise  
To recognize the simple things  
The gift of time that peace will bring, I know

Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps  
Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
You can face the fear

I often find hope  
In the courage of others  
The true and simple act  
of the child who throws the stone  
Defiance in the eyes  
of the children who are fighting  
Dying to exist and the right to have a home  
Runnin' like a river into the hearts of others  
These sweet victories become a raging storm  
Somewhere deep inside of you I know you'll find the  
strength to carry on  
Somewhere deep inside of me I know I'll always  
find my way back home

Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps  
Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps  
You can face the fear  
You can face the fear inside

Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps  
They are big steps

Small Victories are big steps, you know it  
(face the fear inside)  
Small Victories are big steps  
Small--- Victories----

In *Get Up Blues*, Joyce and Jacque (1990) sing a message of resistance.

Get Up Blues

Get up blues, you ain't layin' down on me  
Get up blues, you ain't laying down on me  
Don't bring your sadness and your fear  
Your loneliness ain't wanted here, Get up blues

Get up blues, don't come knockin' on my door  
get up blues, don't come knockin' on my door  
I only open my door to the sun  
Letting in the light, love, and warmth, get up blues

Get up blues, don't come slippin' under my door  
Get up blues, don't come slippin' under my door  
Don't bring your sadness and your fear  
Your loneliness ain't wanted here, Get up blues

Get up, get up blues go away  
Get up, get up blues go away  
Don't bring your sadness and your fear  
Your loneliness ain't wanted here, Get up blues

Get up, get up blues go away  
Get up, get up blues go away  
Don't bring your sadness and your fear  
Your loneliness ain't wanted here, Get up blues

While explored earlier in the section addressing self-acceptance, *I'll Love Myself* (Joyce & Jacque, 1990) is ultimately a song of resistance. In a patriarchal culture which systematically devalues women, the fundamental lesson all women must learn--whether they have experienced physical violence or not--is that of self-love.

In this chapter so far, I have explored the combined power of music and lyrics to elicit strong emotional responses and the ramifications of this in light of traditional male representation of women in the music media. Women's representation of themselves and of their own experiences has also been explored, with careful attention given to its potential to subvert the negative and violent messages of traditional male representation of women. Lyric analysis has been shown to be not only a popular and effective traditional music therapy technique, but also one readily adopted for use in feminist analysis of power and gender-role socialization. Its potential for use in these hallmark techniques of feminist therapy was illustrated in an examination of a number of popular women's songs. In the next section of this chapter, the potential of music to be used for women to give voice to

their own experiences, rather than to hear them reflected in the words of other women, shall be explored.

## **Claiming Voice in Feminist Music Therapy**

As powerful as it is for women to hear themselves and their experiences reflected in the words of other women, it would seem even more powerful for them to hear their own voices and experiences. Since recognizing the impact of the pervasive silencing of all women's voices in patriarchy, feminists have stressed the importance for each woman to gain her own voice, to be heard by herself and by others (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1990):

Moving from silence into speech is, for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of *'talking back'*, that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject--the liberated voice. (hooks, 1990, p. 211)

The creativity involved in this process of claiming voice has been recognized by many feminists, as has the potential of the creative arts in facilitating this process (Anzaldúa, 1990; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1990; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993):

For many of us the acts of writing, painting, performing, and filming are acts of deliberate and desperate determination to subvert the status quo. Creative acts are forms of political activism employing definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms and are not merely aesthetic exercises. We build culture as we inscribe in the various forms. (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxiv)

Anzaldúa further contends that this creativity can change not only the individual, but the world as well: "By sending our voices, visuals, and visions outwards into the world, we alter the walls and make them a framework for new windows and doors" (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxv).

Many maintain that, regardless of the creative art form, it is the telling of one's own story which is empowering (Buffalo, 1990; Dutton, 1992; Morstein, 1988; Tavis, 1992). "The simple act of telling a woman's story from a woman's point of view is a revolutionary act: it has never been done before" (Christ, 1980, p. 7). Indeed the potential healing power of storytelling has been recognized by those working with women in therapy (Buffalo, 1990; Dutton, 1992; Tavis, 1992). "The therapeutic effects for the victim of simply telling her story can be powerful" (Dutton, 1992, p. 32). In describing her feminist adaptation of the Native American use of storytelling as a healing technique, Buffalo (1990) contends that story metaphors can be used to evoke physical, mood, and other psychological changes. In this approach, stories communicate "seed thoughts"--images and metaphors which take root and flower when planted in the consciousness.

Given the potential power of storytelling and of creativity in the personally and politically important task for women of claiming voice, the adoption of the traditional music therapy technique of songwriting would seem ideal for use in feminist music therapy. Songs involve a story, or some sort of metaphor, and they involve the voice--a literal counterpart for the metaphorical voice so frequently referred to by feminists. Additionally, as documented previously, the music itself serves to intensify the emotional impact of the words, making it all the more ideal as a medium for feminist music therapy.

Within a traditional music therapy framework, songwriting has been shown to be an effective therapeutic technique used by many music therapists with a variety of clientele and for a variety of purposes (Aprey & Aprey, 1975; Edgerton, 1990; Ficken, 1976; Freed, 1987; Gfeller, 1990; Ortman, 1984; Schmidt, 1983). It has been used effectively to develop group cohesiveness, to facilitate self-expression, to increase self-esteem, to increase awareness of feelings and needs, and to recover repressed material (Aprey & Aprey, 1987; Edgerton, 1990; Freed, 1987).

Given this breadth of purpose, it would seem that songwriting could readily be adapted to empower women within feminist music therapy by allowing them to hear themselves and to be heard in their own songs. While the focus in the content of the songs would indubitably differ from that in traditional music therapy, much of the basic songwriting techniques used by music therapists would be applicable, if used within the egalitarian therapist-client relationship parameters required by feminist music therapy.

While there is no universally agreed upon approach to the creative process of songwriting, Edgerton (1990) provides a thorough outline of an organized approach which she found to be effective. As well, Edgerton is one of the few to address the issue of music writing as well as lyric writing; I believe writing both original words and music will be necessary for women to have a true sense of gaining their own voice. Edgerton identifies five stages in the complete process of songwriting: lyric analysis and interpretation, music analysis, theme and style selection, lyric writing, and music writing. For Edgerton, this songwriting process can be an individual or a collaborative effort within

group therapy. With the purpose of allowing women to find their own unique voice, songwriting would be best served by an individual approach in feminist music therapy.

The first stage in the songwriting process involves lyric analysis and interpretation of precomposed music chosen by the music therapist. The purpose of this stage is for the women involved to learn lyric writing techniques and to explore ideas and feelings dealt with in popular songs. In feminist music therapy, this stage could also serve the additional purpose of feminist analysis of power and gender-role socialization as outlined previously in this chapter. For the purposes of songwriting, the lyric analysis involves an examination of the themes presented, of the form of the lyrics (e.g., introductions, choruses, verses, bridges, codas, etc.), of specific lyric techniques (e.g., use of feelings, of storytelling, and of question-and-answer styles to elaborate on the theme, etc.), of the rhyming patterns, and of the rhythm of the lyrics.

The second stage in the songwriting process involves an analysis of the precomposed music itself. The purpose of this stage is for the women involved to learn new music writing techniques and to improve their listening skills. This analysis includes an examination of the *'hooks'*, of the musical form, of the instrumentation, of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements, and of any word-painting techniques.

The third stage of the songwriting process involves the selection by each woman of a theme and a musical style. Clearly this area might differ significantly in feminist music therapy from that in a traditional approach to music therapy. Themes would involve women's experiences in general and the individual woman's experiences in particular.

The fourth stage involves the actual writing of the lyrics. Edgerton recommends starting with the chorus or main ideas and then moving to the verses and the bridge, if any. The rhythm and rhyming patterns of the lyrics will be focused on throughout all parts of this stage.

The fifth and final stage of the songwriting process involves composition of the actual music. Edgerton recommends an approach to this using structured improvisation activities.

As with all music therapy techniques and with all approaches to music therapy, the therapist must be flexible, ready to adapt to meet the needs and abilities of each individual participant. In the case of songwriting, sufficient structure must be provided for each woman to enable her to approach the task with confidence and pleasure. On the other hand, sufficient freedom must be allowed each woman so that she may truly find and hear her own voice, as hoped for in feminist music therapy.

In this chapter, the representational power of music and its cognitive and emotional impact has been examined. Traditionally women have been represented by men in all the mass media, including that of music, and this has not always been to women's advantage. Yet some women have been successful in representing themselves and their experiences through music. In so doing, they have enabled women's own voices to be heard and they have effectively subverted that male representation of women.

This subversive potential of music has been shown to make it an ideal medium for feminist analysis of gender-role socialization and of power in feminist music therapy. The exploration of two particular feminist music therapy techniques--lyric analysis and



songwriting--have shown them to be extremely well suited to the tasks of feminist analysis. In listening to and singing the words of women songwriters, women can explore the subversion of the patriarchal message. In writing and singing their own songs, women can reclaim their own voice and their own experiences. Ultimately, through feminist music therapy, women can experience the power of singing subversion, singing soul.

## **11. Feminist Music Therapy with a Diversity of Women**

In previous chapters, feminist therapy and feminist music therapy have been examined for their potential to empower women in general. Although reference has been made throughout to a variety of women's experiences, in this chapter attention shall be directed specifically to the issue of diversity--that women represent a variety of ethnic and sociocultural groups--and its meaning for feminist music therapy. First, the manner in which this issue has been neglected in the past--by both feminism and feminist therapy--shall be examined.

Recent years have seen the emergence of *'politics of diversity'* as attempts have been made to respond to criticisms of feminism for its ignorance of the diversity of women's experiences (Bricker-Jenkins, Hooyman, & Gottlieb, 1991). Although feminism has as its central tenet the recognition of the oppression of all women, until recently this central tenet has been described primarily by White, middle class, Anglo-Saxon women and has thus been based on their particular experiences (Burstow, 1992; hooks, 1984).

Feminism was initially taken to task for this systematic and persistent exclusion with regard to Black women (Boyd, 1990; hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1987; Smith, 1983).<sup>24</sup> "The history of White women who are unable to hear Black women's words, or to maintain dialogue with us, is long and discouraging" (Lorde, 1987, p. 66). With its focus on the oppressive effects of sexism, feminism has ignored the impact of racism on the degree and nature of these effects (hooks, 1984). Setting up a false dichotomy between sexism and racism, feminism has often required that Black women identify only one of these--sexism--as the overriding oppression in their lives, effectively overlooking the possibility of an interaction of oppressions (hooks, 1992 & 1984; Smith, 1983).

Later, feminism and, to some extent, Black feminism were taken to task for ignoring the needs, issues, experiences, and contributions of not only Black women, but of all women of color as well as those of women of different class, sexual orientation, age, and ability (Anzaldúa, 1990; Burstow, 1992; Gutiérrez, 1991; hooks, 1984; Kanuha, 1990; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). As a result of this exclusion, feminism has been perceived by many diverse groups of women as having little applicability or meaning for them (Boyd, 1990; Gutiérrez, 1991; Kanuha, 1990). Indeed, some have criticized feminism, with its *'White privilege'* underpinnings, for being effectively as oppressive as the very patriarchal system it challenges (Boyd, 1990; Lorde, 1984).

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<sup>24</sup>I choose to use the term *'Black'* so as to include not only African-Americans, but Blacks of other descent in the United States, as well as Blacks in Canada. While there is some diversity in their experiences (just as there is among members of each individual group), there is also commonality--they share the experiences of growing up Black in a White-dominated culture. I shall use the term African American when specifically referring to those Black Americans of African descent.

Since these criticisms were first voiced, there has been an ongoing struggle to expand the theory and philosophy of feminism to include the diverse experiences of all women. While some attempts to understand the interaction of different oppressions (e.g., sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, etc.) have been made, the struggle is by no means over yet. Some maintain that the recent attempts to include women of color reflect tokenism more than they do substantive change (Anzaldúa, 1990; Bricker-Jenkins et al, 1991; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). While women of diverse backgrounds and their works have been included, this does not reflect an analytic and integrative inclusion of such issues as race, class, and gender in the theory of feminism, (Anzaldúa, 1990). Anzaldúa, (1990) points out that while *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983)--one of the seminal works in the challenge of feminist exclusionary practices--is frequently cited as an example of diversity, the practice of viewing women as a unitary category continues. While many White feminists active in the leadership of the feminist movement have made a start by acknowledging their past failure to be inclusive, they still have further to go. At the present, they invite 'other' women to join 'their' feminist movement, rather than reforging an entirely new feminism; they acknowledge the existence of racism and its deleterious effects, yet fail to be actively anti-racist (Brown & Root, 1990).

Just as feminism has been criticized for its ignorance of the diversity of women's experiences, so too has feminist therapy been similarly criticized. Its theory lacks cross-cultural analysis (Turner, 1991). With very little written by or about non-White and nonmiddle class women, feminist therapy has been developed almost exclusively by and with White women, based on White women's sociopolitical context and experiences

(Brown, 1990; Brown & Root, 1990; Kanuha, 1990). Brown (1990) points out that the landmark works in feminist therapy are all by White middle class women (e.g., Miller (1976), Sturdivant (1980), Greenspan (1983), etc.); so too are the landmark works on female development by White, middle class women (e.g., Chodorow (1979), Dinnerstein (1976), Gilligan (1992 & 1982), etc.). While identifying the personal as political, to date that "personal has encompassed as narrow range of experiences" (Brown, 1990, p. 7). Despite this, feminist therapy is presented by many as inherently applicable to all women (Kanuha, 1990).

In practice, feminist therapy has involved almost exclusively White, middle class women therapists and almost exclusively White, middle class women clients (Brown, 1990). It is based on a feminist analysis of women's socialization with gender as the primary organizing variable, while ignoring the importance of different social conditions for women of different groups (Brown, 1990; Gutiérrez, 1991; Kanuha, 1990).

Most feminist therapists have been quick to identify the masculinist biases inherent in other theories and the practices that are associated with them . . . but the subtle aspects of racist and classist assumptions have been less visible and less salient to many White feminist therapists, who have benefitted from privilege of race and (in many instances) class. (Brown, 1990, p. 4)

Brown (1990) criticizes this exclusive focus on gender, asking "Whose socialization are we referring to when we cite *female socialization*?" (p. 7). In adopting a linear model of causality, feminist therapy has, until recently, ignored the multilayered context of most women's lives; in forcing women to choose sexism as *the* primary oppression, it has ignored the complicated interaction of a multitude of oppressions (Kanuha, 1990). In so

doing, Barrett (1990) contends that women of color (and I would add, women of other diverse backgrounds) have been no better represented by much of feminist therapy than women in general have been by traditional therapies.

A number of different factors have contributed to this tendency of feminist therapy to ignore the diversity of women's experiences. Given that feminist therapy is a direct outgrowth of the feminist movement (a largely White, middle class movement), its exclusionary practices should not perhaps be entirely surprising. As well, the personal and professional development of mental health professionals has taken place within the dominant culture--White feminist therapists were White long before they were feminists (Brown, 1990; Greene, 1992). Their professional socialization has typically involved "trained-in insensitivity" and, for those lucky enough to receive anti-racist training, perhaps one lecture on working with minorities (Greene, 1992). Mental health research has, in similar fashion to its masculine predecessor, generalized from White women's experiences to all women: "The clichéd White, middle class male college, sophomore research subject has been replaced by his sister" (Brown, 1990, p. 6). For those who have been tempted to return to an intrapsychic approach to therapy, issues of diversity have been even further excluded. Perhaps because of the allure of a complex theory or of mainstream acceptability, some feminist therapists are replacing the feminist political analysis with a largely intrapsychic one. The end result is a double blow to women and to people of color, where White women's racism is interpreted as the "unconscious reenactment of oppression suffered at their mother's hands" (Brown, 1990, p. 12). All of

these factors combine to make the exclusion of women of diverse backgrounds possible and, at the same time, almost unnoticeable.

Some recent attempts to reverse this exclusionary tendency have been made. A growing number of feminist therapists are incorporating an integrative analysis of a variety of oppressions in their clinical practice (Brown, & Root, 1990; Kanuha, 1990). While initially more aware of the experiences of the lesbian community, feminist therapy is now beginning to include the experiences of a diversity of other women (Adelman & Faunce, 1990).

Given this struggle to overcome strong exclusionary tendencies on the part of both feminist therapy and feminism, it would seem wise to thoroughly explore the issue of diversity so that I, as a White, occasionally middle class, Canadian woman, might develop a more complete model of feminist music therapy.<sup>25</sup> In this manner, I might be able to learn from the mistakes and successes of both feminists and feminist therapists; rather than treating the experiences of women of diverse sociocultural backgrounds as a footnote to the *'White female norm'*, I might be able to start with the premise that women have very diverse experiences and that these are irrevocably intertwined with their experiences as women.

To this end, I shall first explore the issue of the diversity of women's experiences in general terms. The contrast between views of women's diversity and women's commonality shall then be examined. Finally the impact of diversity in feminist therapy

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<sup>25</sup>I grew up in a middle class family, but my salary as a single woman has not always met the minimum standards set for middle class.

practice shall be explored in general terms and in terms of its meaning for individual therapists working with women of different ethnic and sociocultural groups.<sup>26</sup>

## Diversity

To truly embrace the concept of diversity is to recognize that the major systems of oppression function simultaneously and in a closely interconnected fashion (Lorde, 1984; Smith, 1983).<sup>27</sup> Women do not comprise a single uniform category, nor do their experiences reflect uniformity (hooks, 1992; Levine, 1992). Rather, women face a variety of different choices and these choices can be more or less limited by any of a combination of oppressions depending on the woman's race, class, sexual orientation, age, and so forth (Coffman, 1990; Lorde, 1984). These oppressions should not be collapsed into a single, all-encompassing oppression of women as a group, for these oppressions are neither the same nor are they interchangeable (Anzaldúa, 1990).

As [women] . . . we have all known oppression of some kind. But having experienced oppression does not mean that what or how we have suffered is interchangeable with another's experience. To deny uniqueness would be but another means of victimizing. (Rosewater, 1990, p. 300).

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<sup>26</sup>For the purposes of this dissertation, I shall accept Worell & Remer's (1992) definition of '*ethnic group*' as one which is "identified by self and others as physically or culturally different and . . . [for which inclusion is] through a common nationality, cultural heritage, or race" (p. 280).

<sup>27</sup>In discussing oppression, I shall accept Anzaldúa's (1990) definition of it as the "systematic and institutionalized mistreatment of one group of people by another for whatever reason" (p. 20).



Nor can the shared oppression experienced because of being a woman be used to override the diversity of other experiences (Harris & Ordoña, 1990). Rather each woman experiences a combination of interacting oppressions unique to her.

It is important to note that the problem of these oppressions is not the result of difference, but instead the result of an inability to recognize these differences and their potential for enrichment (Anzaldúa, 1990; Lorde, 1984). This failure to accept and celebrate differences is at the root of all *'isms'*--sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and so forth. This failure to view differences as potentially enriching, to see them only as a potential threat, is exacerbated by the tendency to view the world in a dichotomous fashion--in such terms as us/them, good/bad, and right/wrong (Anzaldúa, 1990; Lorde, 1984). It is the up/down dichotomy which leads to the view of liberty as a limited resource--if you are up, some other group must be down. In the United States, the idea of the *'American melting pot'* further exacerbates the tendency to oppress those who are different. According to this notion, the ideal involves the assimilation of all cultures to create a single culture with similar norms and values. "America, the melting pot, steals from everyone's culture and denigrates those parts it cannot duplicate" (Root, 1990, p. 306). The norm of this culture created through assimilation has come to mean the White, middle class, protestant, heterosexual, able-bodied man (Barrett, 1990). Multiculturalism is not accepted, and those who will not or cannot conform to the norm are devalued. Unfortunately, for those belonging to non-White ethnic groups, conformity is an impossibility, regardless of how long they have lived in the United States. This is true in Canada as well, despite its professed adherence to a philosophy of multiculturalism. The

end result is the interaction of a number of oppressions which affects women differently depending on where they find themselves in this hierarchy. It is the existence of these different oppressions--supported by women and feminists, as well as by men--and the effects of their interaction which feminists and feminist therapists have, until recently ignored.

While there has indeed been a recent increase in recognition of the diversity of oppressions, it has been accompanied by what I believe to be an unfortunate tendency to rank these oppressions. The game of *'who's got it worse'*, while played by some unconsciously and by others consciously, inevitably results in discounting, minimalizing, or denying the experiences of some women. While not advocating the ranking of oppressions in an outright fashion, Smith (1983) implies as much in such statements as: "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all systems of oppression" (p. 278). This argument only works if Black women are at the absolute bottom and are subject to each and every form of oppression. I believe this argument replicates the error in thinking made by White feminists, working class men, and Black men (e.g., if women were free . . . ; if the working class were free . . . ; or if Blacks were free . . . ). hooks (1984) makes no bones about believing Black women to be at the bottom of all hierarchies, experiencing far greater suffering and oppression than others--particularly White women. She points out that many Black women have trouble seeing White women as oppressed at all. She maintains that ranking is indeed possible:

The motives of materially privileged educated White women with a variety of career and lifestyle options available to them must be questioned when they insist that "suffering cannot be measured". Fritz is by no means the first White feminist to make this statement. It is a statement that I have never heard a poor woman of any race make. (hooks, 1984, p. 4)

I would strongly disagree with hooks on this matter--I believe this is simply another example of the persistent dichotomous world view. While Black women have clearly suffered oppression, that does not mean that other women's experiences should be discounted or devalued. A woman dead from poverty in the ghetto or anorexia in the suburbs is still a dead woman. As well, Native North American women have identified themselves as excluded from Black feminist theory while being lower in the hierarchy than Black women; the recognition of their oppression should not be used to discount that of Black women, anymore than that of Black women should be used to discount the experiences of White women. "All of us would do well to stop fighting each other for our space at the bottom, because there ain't no more room" (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 137).

A number of other feminists agree that ranking, while tempting, is counterproductive (Anzaldúa, 1990; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Siegel, 1990; Smith, 1983). It is tempting because "most of us think that the space we live in is the most important space there is, and that the conditions that we find ourselves in is the condition that must be changed or else" (Reagon, 1983, p. 365). Yet it is essential that we come to realize that:

the source of your pain is neither equal nor identical to the source of my pain; we have different histories and different sets of response. Neither you nor I can judge the intensity of each other's suffering, nor can we evaluate it on a scale of legitimacy. (Siegel, 1990, p. 333)

Ultimately, we must be aware of our own oppression as well as that of others; we must fight equally against all oppressions, for

feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as White, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism. (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 61)

While we will have initially greater awareness of and feeling for the urgency of eliminating our own sources of oppression, we must expand that.

In concluding this examination of the general issue of diversity, some mention must be given to several interconnected tendencies. These include the tendency to view the world through only one set of lenses (our own) and the tendency, when this view is challenged to view the world dichotomously--to divide the world into two major unitary categories of '*self*' and '*other*', to confuse these two categories with such other dichotomies as right/wrong and good/bad, and to subsequently value the one category, while devaluing the other. These tendencies can create a powerful world view which is so deeply entrenched, its very existence is difficult to recognize.

Feminism represents a challenge to one particular world view--the patriarchal male world view--which is supported by just such tendencies. Yet in so challenging patriarchy, some feminists have identified these tendencies as exclusively male. However tempting this

alternate view of women as essentially above all that might be, I believe it is incorrect. The recent events concerning diversity in the feminist movement provide ample examples of women succumbing to these *'male'* tendencies. Originally feminists challenged men for thinking they represented and could speak for all humans and that, indeed, all humans were male. In turn, these feminists--White, middle class women--were challenged by Black feminists for thinking they represented and could speak for all women and that all women were White. Some of those making this challenge attributed these tendencies to the White culture, rather than to the male culture. Yet, as we shall see, they are no more exclusively-White tendencies than they are exclusively-male tendencies; Black feminists were soon challenged themselves for thinking they represented and could speak for all women of color and that all women of color were Black. While this challenge by other women of color has been the latest to date, I believe there is still room for more. In reading the literature of women of color or *'Third World'* women, I was struck by the lack of recognition of the existence of any other country than the United States, of any other experiences than those of American *'Third World'* women. As well, the few attempts made to include others to a greater degree have been flawed--they used the term *'North American'*, yet they included neither Mexicans nor Canadians. I challenge American women for thinking they represent and can speak for all North American women and for thinking that, indeed, all North American women are American. While one might be tempted to attribute these tendencies to the male culture, to the White culture, or even to the American culture, I would argue that perhaps they are simply human tendencies:

We have all been programmed to respond to human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. (Lorde, 1984, p. 115)

Ascribing these tendencies to all humans is not to excuse them in any way; to eliminate them, however, we must first acknowledge their universal nature: "It is often hard for us to believe that we can be both oppressed and oppressive at the same time" (Smith, 1983, pp. xliii-xliv).

In discussing the ability to be both oppressed and oppressor, hooks (1992) makes an important distinction between prejudicial feeling and effect. She contends, and I believe rightfully so, that because of White privilege, the impact of White prejudicial feelings is far greater than that of Blacks. I would, however, have to disagree with her conclusion that Blacks cannot subsequently be racist. A distinction should be made between racism--the "systematic and institutionalized mistreatment of one group of people by another based on racial heritage" (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. 22)--and racist beliefs--prejudicial beliefs about one group of people based on racial heritage. One can have racist attitudes with or without systematic and institutionalized support. The attitude is the same in either case, however, as already discussed, the effect is different because of differential access to power. The importance of attitude, however, should not be overlooked. Just because one does not currently have access to power, does not mean that this shall always be the case, nor shall it be so in all situations. The presence of oppressive attitudes (be they sexist, misogynist, *'andrist'*--a term created by Levine (1992) for man-hating--racist, or classist, etc.) allows for the possibility of oppression. Each of us needs to explore our own potential to be

oppressor, as well as oppressed; to acknowledge it and to deal with it. In the words of Audre Lorde (1984):

I urge each one of us to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears. Then the personal as political can begin to illuminate all our choices. (p.15)

In this section of the chapter, the exclusion of the diversity of women's experiences by both feminists and feminist therapists alike has been examined. They have been shown to ignore the variety of oppressions and their intimate interaction experienced by women of diverse backgrounds. The importance of acknowledging this diversity of oppression has been highlighted, as has the danger of ranking them. The experiences of feminists in attempting to deal with the issue of diversity have shown that the tendency to see the world exclusively from one's own point of view is neither an exclusively-male tendency, nor an exclusively-White one. It is a human tendency. So too is the tendency to see the world as a place of dichotomies.

This dichotomous tendency can also be seen in another aspect of the feminist debates over diversity--the issue of diversity is almost never mentioned without some reference to the issue of commonality. This shall be the focus of the section which follows.

## **Diversity and Commonality**

Much of recent feminist controversy has centered around the diversity-commonality dichotomy. Are women individuals characterized by diversity or are they a group characterized by commonality? On the one hand, women have been shown to have

much in common, regardless of the diversity of their experiences (Hall, 1992). On the other hand, more differences have been found among women than between women and men on the whole (Hyde, 1991). Are diversity and commonality two opposite poles in a dichotomy? I do not believe so. I believe that part of the difficulty of the struggle has been as a result of our attempt to answer an 'or' question, when the answer is that women are characterized by both diversity and commonality. Another part of the difficulty has been as a result of the confusion of the false diversity/commonality dichotomy with the right/wrong dichotomy and the good/bad dichotomy. The danger does not lie in viewing women as individuals with a diversity of experiences, nor does it lie in viewing women as a group with common experiences and common goals. The danger lies in viewing women as characterized only by diversity or characterized only by commonality (Coffman, 1990).

In viewing women as characterized only by diversity, the contribution of feminist analysis of sexism and its impact on all women is ignored. The ability and even the desire to work together towards the common feminist goal of elimination of oppression of all women risks being lost. Divisiveness can become an insurmountable obstacle.

In viewing women as a group characterized only by commonality of needs, experiences, and goals, the richness of their diverse experiences is lost. As well, some feminists have succumbed to the dangerous tendency of confusing unity with conformity, of confusing common goals and common experiences with a complete lack of differences. While women do share the common experience of living in a sexist and misogynistic world, their experiences are shaped by such differences as race, class, age, and so forth.



The absence of these considerations weakens any feminist discussion of the personal and the political . . . Without community, there is no liberation. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist. (Lorde, 1984, pp. 110-112)

This tendency to ignore or exclude differences--an all-too human tendency--has been, I believe, exacerbated by the concept of a feminist '*sisterhood*'. "Sisterhood at its best is a brilliant amalgam of female friendship, trust, and righteous purpose. At its worst, it excludes rather than includes; it homogenizes all women to a political, cultural, and sexual One" (Levine, 1992, p. 238). Part of the problem of feminist sisterhood lies in the acceptance by many of the false idea that women are better, more nurturing than men. For me, this is just a new spin on the old sexist proscription that women are to be nice: "The idea is that we are not going to do to one another what men have always done--we are not going to silence one another, nor be competitive" (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. 317). This produces the myth that feminist sisterhood should be built on love:

Their version of Sisterhood dictates that sisters were to "unconditionally" love one another; that they were to avoid conflict and minimize disagreement; that they were not to criticize one another, especially in public. For a time these mandates created an illusion of unity suppressing the hostility, perpetual disagreement, and abusive criticism (trashing) that was often the norm in feminist groups. (hooks, 1984, p. 46)

Some maintain that when criticism was finally voiced it was received, although not given, in anger; that descriptions by minority women of racism in the feminist movement were perceived by some women as being anti-White rather than pro minority women, just as feminist descriptions appear anti-male rather than pro woman to some men (Barrett,

1990). I believe, rather, that anger has been felt and expressed on all sides. This is not because women are '*naturally catty*', nor is it because they have picked up bad '*male habits*'. I believe it is because the end result of a feminist sisterhood based on a false sense of love is that all feel betrayed--those who have been excluded and oppressed by their '*sisters*' and those who have been angrily accused.

I should mention that this concept of feminist sisterhood has not only proven problematic between the diverse groups of women; it has also been adopted, applied, and proven problematic within the groups. For example, some Black feminists have described their feeling pressured to conform to a single uniform definition of Blackness. Yet

there is no monolithic concept of Black women, but there are many models of Black womanhood. This concept applies to all women of color. As women, women of color are distinct individuals who make choices as to the many ways in which they gain strength. (Boyd, 1990, p. 158-159)

The struggle against Black feminist essentialism has been as acrimonious as those struggles among the general feminist membership (Boyd, 1990; hooks, 1992). Both of these struggles have been acrimonious because of the same false idea of love underlying feminist sisterhood.

Feminist sisterhood must be redefined. It must no longer be based on a common bond of equal and identical victimization or even on the common bond of membership in an exclusive '*girls' club*' in which all are nicer and more nurturing. Instead, it must be redefined as a political coalition based on the common bond of working towards the elimination of all types of oppression. Its new definition must be based on a belief in the value of both diversity and commonality (Coffman, 1990).

A successful balance between diversity and commonality must be incorporated not only into our definition of feminist sisterhood, but also into our definition of feminism and into the heart and actions of every feminist. In so doing, we will all be richer: "When we define ourselves, the place in which I am like you and the place in which I am not like you, I am not excluding you from joining--I am broadening the joining" (Lorde, 1984, p. 10).

Having explored the issue of diversity in general terms in this chapter thus far, its impact in the actual practice of feminist therapy shall be the focus of the section which follows. Questions as to whether feminist therapists should work with women of different backgrounds and if so, how they should proceed shall be examined.

## **Diversity and Feminist Therapy**

While there exists a considerable number of myths concerning advantages of ethnic and cultural similarity between therapist and client, there exists little actual research, and even less consensus concerning the issue (Brody, 1984). In this section, I shall explore just what the literature does show in general terms of client-therapist similarity, as well as in specific terms of White feminist therapists working with Black or Native American women. I have chosen to narrow my examination in this manner for two reasons. In the first instance, the diversity of women's experience is so great that a thorough examination of all groups of women would be beyond the scope of a single work. Secondly, the clinical component of this dissertation, outlined in Section Three, involves an examination of the effects of feminist music therapy provided by myself, a White feminist music therapist

working with African American, Native American, and European American women from central Georgia, U.S.A.

There are extremely few feminist therapists who discount the possibility of effective interracial therapeutic relationships out of hand. Burstow (1992) is one of the few who comes closest to doing so. She argues that, because of the value of shared experience, therapists and clients should, whenever possible, have similar backgrounds: In feminist therapy women therapists should work with women clients, lesbian therapists should work with lesbian clients, women of color therapists should work with women of color clients, and so forth.

Other feminist therapists contend that client-therapist similarity is not always possible, nor does it necessarily guarantee similarity of experience (Brody, 1984; Brown, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Rosewater, 1990; Trotman, 1984; Worell & Remer, 1992). The number of feminist therapists is still relatively small, and the number of feminist therapists who are women of color is considerably smaller still (Brown, 1990).<sup>28</sup> Until recently, feminist therapy has involved White women therapists working with White women clients. Yet there has been identified a need to make feminist therapy more accessible to a wider range of women--to include significant numbers of women of color and other minority groups, both as clients and as therapists (Brown, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). This is important both on a moral level--so that feminist therapy is no longer exclusive--and on a practical level--feminist therapy has been

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<sup>28</sup>Women of color are similarly under-represented within the traditional therapy professions.

shown to be particularly effective with women of color (Rosewater, 1990; Trotman, 1984). With a feminist sociopolitical analysis of oppression as its central technique and with its requirement of an egalitarian client-therapist relationship, feminist therapy has much to offer women of color. It can provide an understanding of the sociopolitical basis of their powerlessness, placing it within the context of systematic and institutionalized sexism and racism. In so doing, it can preclude client blaming on the part of both the client and the therapist:

It is . . . the basic tenets of modeling an egalitarian relationship, authenticity, and encouragement of the client's responsibility for her own life that are most likely to facilitate the Black woman's escape from the psychological chains and weights imposed by over 300 years of oppression. (Trotman, 1984, p. 106)

Yet while feminist therapy holds much promise for women of color, very few women of color are available to provide that feminist therapy. Furthermore, Brody (1984) points out that the majority of those few women of color counselors who do practice feminist therapy have been traditionally trained, just as their White counterparts have been trained. This process of *'professional acculturation'* provides them with information on the needs and values of the dominant culture, to the almost complete exclusion of those of minority groups. Further still,

no amount of theoretical insight, technical competence, or information about Blacks can ensure that a therapist--Black or White--can function effectively in the Black community; it is the personal impact of the therapist on the client that determines the client's receptivity to change. (Brody, 1984, p. 110)

Finally, as outlined previously in this chapter, women and their experiences differ considerably even within the same sociocultural group. A Native woman may have little more in common with her Native client than her White feminist therapist counterpart. In the words of an Hispanic American therapist: "The client cannot always share just because we share a common cultural heritage" (Brody, 1994). Johnson (1983) comments further that, "from jump, a presumption that I discarded fast was that the dynamics of communication between two Black women as client and therapist would be as easy as pie" (p. 320). Certainly women do share the common experience of growing up in a male-dominated world: " . . . a woman does have unique experiences, different from men, that she may find especially useful in understanding her female patients and from which patients may profit" (Gotz, 1991, p. 516). Certainly Black women do share the common experience of growing up Black and female in a White-male dominated world. But commonality, as we have seen, does not mean conformity or uniformity of experience and client-therapist sociocultural similarity is not always the determining factor in therapeutic effectiveness.

A number of feminist therapists contend that, under certain circumstances and with certain preparation, White feminist therapists can work effectively with minority clients (Boyd, 1990; Brody, 1984; Brown, 1990; Johnson, 1983; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Trotman, 1984; Worell & Remer, 1992). Their potential to be effective depends on a variety of factors--characteristics of the situation, of the particular client, and of the particular therapist. Prior to even considering working with a client from a different background, a therapist must be aware of her own background (privileged or oppressed)

with attention given to such specific issues as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ability (Lerman & Porter, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992).

Having examined their own background, White feminist therapists must then be aware of and be prepared to deal with a number of potential problems which can arise between White therapists and minority clients. An obvious problem is that posed for a White therapist if she is unfamiliar with her client's culture. Without cultural familiarity, a therapist may assume her client's struggles to be the same as her own (Boyd, 1990; Brody, 1984). She may be unaware of or simply deny the existence of any cultural differences. She may subsequently be unable to view the client and her experiences from the client's perspective, therefore failing to adhere to a principle tenet of feminist therapy--the honoring of each woman's perspective. This failure to recognize a client's perspective and its impact on the client is illustrated in the words of an African American rape victim:

When I heard about this group, I asked my therapist (a White woman) if I could attend. It seemed like all she was concerned about was the fact that I got raped. Hell! I knew that was important, but that bastard got my last \$25. That was all the money I had till pay day. I can deal with the rape later, but I won't have a job if I can't get back and forth to work. (Boyd, 1990, p. 156)

Boyd adds that White therapists, who are unaware of their own culture or of that of their minority client, can bring to therapy "their excessive White, middle class baggage" (Boyd, 1990, p. 155).

Another problem can arise for White feminist therapists if their minority clients perceive them as representatives of authority (Trotman, 1984). This may hinder self-disclosure on the part of the client and may also elicit guilt feelings on the part of the

therapist, maybe even focusing her on justifying her own position (Brody, 1984; Trotman, 1984). Guilt feelings are not unusual, for no one is truly free of the impact of living in a racist world. "Many well-meaning, dedicated, and sympathetic therapists are often trapped by the symbolism of their white skin in view of the American history and the subtle pervasiveness of America's guilt" (Trotman, 1984, p. 101). Furthermore, a White therapist, when faced with anger against Whites and against White privilege, may discourage its expression or become defensive if she misinterprets it as personal rejection, rather than as the product for her client of a lifetime of being oppressed because of race (Brody, 1984). A White therapist may also be tempted to become her client's self-appointed advocate, rather than empowering her client (Brody, 1984).

A final difficulty facing White therapists is establishing and maintaining an egalitarian relationship with their minority clients (Brody, 1984). This is, of course, difficult with all women, however it can be even more difficult with a minority client given the traditional institutionalized White-Black and White-Native relationship of dominant and subordinate. Furthermore, Black women are wary of therapy in general and rightfully so--traditional psychological research and practice has served to perpetuate racist stereotypes (Boyd, 1990). Subsequently Black women do not have a tradition of seeking psychological help and this is only exacerbated by their historic wariness of relationships with White people (Trotman, 1984). This wariness can hinder the initial development of a therapeutic relationships, yet



if the White therapist can establish an effective rapport at initial contact and build a therapeutic alliance in relatively rapid fashion, successful outcomes can be achieved with lower-income Black clients despite their initial sense of wariness and consequently slower progress in therapy. (Griffith & Jones, 1979, p. 230)

The potential for problems between White feminist therapists and minority clients is not insignificant. Yet the consensus amongst the feminist therapists describing these problems is that they are not insurmountable obstacles. Awareness of the potential for these problems to arise is the first step towards their elimination. Further specific steps shall be outlined next for those White feminist therapists who intend to work with Black or Native clients.

There are three major steps which feminist therapists should take in order to prepare themselves to work with clients of different ethnic or sociocultural groups. Therapists must examine and assess their own attitudes; therapists must become '*culturally literate*', increasing their knowledge of their client's cultural norms, values, and experiences; and therapists must develop specific therapeutic skills needed for working with their particular client. Each of these three steps is crucial to therapeutic effectiveness in instances of client-therapist dissimilarity.

In the area of personal attitudes, therapists should start by learning to understand and value themselves--they must explore such issues as their own gender, ethnicity, culture, class, and sexual orientation (Lerman & Porter, 1990; Turner, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1992). They can then examine their ethnocentric biases--identifying any false beliefs, myths, stereotypes, or misinformation they might have come to accept about Black or Native women (Boyd, 1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Rosewater, 1990). This can

involve not only personal work in antiracism, but also in eliminating homophobia, classism, ageism, and ethnocentrism. This work is essential, yet not easily or quickly accomplished. Many of our attitudes are formed at an early age, absorbed from those around us before we are capable of critical assessment. Rave (1990) also points out that our very experiences of being oppressed as women and of being '*outsiders*', make it difficult for us to see ourselves as the '*insiders*' which we also are. "What is excruciatingly difficult for many White feminists is to comprehend how we might be the perpetrators, the enforcers, and the reinforcers of White privilege" (Rave, 1990, p. 320). Thus efforts to identify and challenge our world view must not only be genuine, but also of an in-depth and long-term nature: "Cross-cultural training that is short and superficial, provided by those not living in the culture or community, can do more harm than good" (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 154). Through a dedication of time and effort, each therapist must learn that her experience of being oppressed is not interchangeable with that of her client; she must learn to become comfortable with differences between herself and her client, and she must learn to celebrate those differences (Kanuha, 1990; Rosewater, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992).

Learning is involved in the second step for White feminist therapists intending to work with African American and Native American women, but it is learning of a different nature: Therapists must learn about the particular ethnic and sociocultural framework of their clients' lives. This involves the values and strengths of the particular ethnic and sociocultural group, as well as the systemic and institutionalized oppression and barriers--including barriers to mental health services--facing the group (Anzaldúa, 1990; Boyd,

1990; Lerman & Porter, 1990; Rosewater, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). This cultural literacy provides essential information concerning what issues can and should be addressed in feminist therapy. In this fashion, feminist therapists must become students--students of their client and her world--and yet clients should not become teachers. "It is not the duty of the oppressed to educate the oppressor. White feminist therapists and our theories must pro-actively seek to be anti-racist and multicultural" (Brown, 1990, p. 18). Feminist therapists must do their own work in becoming nonethnocentric and anti-racist, relying on their own research through readings and consultation with appropriate agencies (Boyd, 1990; Brown, 1990). This work should be an integral part of their lives and not just limited to one week, one course, or one book (Anzaldúa, 1990; Rave, 1990). Ultimately, all feminist therapists should learn that each client has the right to culturally-literate treatment and that each client is the expert of her own feelings and perceptions (Rosewater, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). This is not a new idea in feminist therapy; it is, however, a relatively new idea to expand its application to women of diversity.

The third and final major step for White feminist therapists intending to work with women of different sociocultural groups involves the development of specific skills. One of the most important of such skills is the ability to work with the client on feminist analysis of power in the context of sexism and racism (Johnson, 1983; Kanuha, 1990; Worell & Remer, 1992). Therapists must be able to facilitate the client's exploration and management of such issues as anger and internalized oppression (Trotman, 1984; Worell & Remer, 1992). Therapists working with Black and Native women must also learn to make particularly effective use of self-disclosure in order to foster an egalitarian

relationship and to facilitate self-disclosure on the part of the client (Johnson, 1983; Trotman, 1984; Worell & Remer, 1992).<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, White feminist therapists must have the skills to empower their minority clients, just as they empower other clients. They must be able to honor the client's perspective and to foster her independence. Of course, complete empowerment is not just personal, but also political, and so feminist therapists, in addition to their work in therapy, must be actively involved in pursuing actual social change, working towards the elimination of oppression of all women.

This chapter has explored the manner in which both feminists and feminist therapists have ignored the diverse experiences of women and the complex interaction of a variety of oppressions--not just sexism, but also racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and American ethnocentrism. An awareness and inclusion of the diversity of experiences for women is crucial. While it is important to understand that women's experiences of oppression are neither alike, nor interchangeable, it is equally important to understand that these should not be ranked. The danger of the ranking of oppression lies in the discounting and devaluing of some women's experiences that often accompanies the establishment of a hierarchy. Although women's experiences are diverse, all women's experiences should be honored.

While recognizing the importance of addressing past failures to include and honor all women's experiences, this chapter also highlighted the importance of achieving a successful balance between diversity and commonality. Feminism and its idea of feminist

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<sup>29</sup>It should be noted that comfort in self-disclosure on the part of the client is more often linked to client-therapist class similarity than it is to racial similarity.

sisterhood need to be redefined so that they acknowledge both diversity of experience and the common bond of working towards the elimination of the oppression of all women.

When first raised, diversity appeared to be a male-female issue. Men were describing and structuring the world from their perspective as if all humans were male. Later, diversity appeared to be a Black-White issue; the world was being described from an all-White perspective and structured to favor White people. Yet, I believe, an examination of feminist response to the issue of diversity has shown it to be neither a Black-White issue, nor a black-and-white issue. Diversity is a complex issue requiring the incorporation of the experiences of not only White women, not only Black women, nor only American women, but women of all groups and all countries. Diversity involves acknowledgement of not only the complex interaction of sexism and racism, but also of classism, heterosexism, ableism, and ageism. Feminists and feminist therapists must expand their focus from a single perspective not simply to a double perspective, but to a multitude of perspectives. Feminists and feminist therapists must acknowledge, honor, and, indeed, celebrate their differences while renewing their common commitment to the elimination of the oppression of all women.

In keeping with their commitment to honor women's diversity, feminist therapists must make their therapy services accessible and sensitive to all women. While feminist therapists have been shown to be capable of providing effective therapy for women of different ethnic and sociocultural backgrounds, this is only true under particular circumstances. The therapist must first make a commitment to identifying and challenging

her personal attitudes and beliefs, to becoming culturally literate, and to developing the specific skills needed to empower women of a particular ethnic and sociocultural group.

Similarly, feminist music therapy must be used to empower women of diverse ethnic and sociocultural backgrounds. As this dissertation represents the first proposal for feminist music therapy, there is no current diversity of feminist music therapists--that must come with time. In the meantime, I must make a personal commitment to making feminist music therapy services accessible and sensitive to all women in need. Subsequently, as outlined for White feminist therapists working with minority clients, I too must undergo a process of personal belief examination and development of empowerment skills within the framework of cultural literacy. As mentioned previously, this dissertation will ultimately examine the effectiveness of feminist music therapy services as provided by a White feminist therapist working with African American and Native American women from central Georgia, U.S.A.. Subsequently, it is these two particular groups of women which shall be the focus of the chapters which follow.

## 12. White Therapists Working with Black Clients

An essential preliminary task for any feminist music therapists intending to work with clients of ethnic groups different from their own is the development of cultural literacy. Familiarity with the impact on women of growing up in a male culture is not enough, for the very nature of the impact is influenced by ethnic group membership. Feminist music therapists must familiarize themselves with their clients' culture, with the experiences common to women of that culture, and with the sources of strength and jeopardy for them. This need for cultural literacy is particularly great for White feminist music therapists working with Black clients. Belonging as they do to the dominant culture, White feminist music therapists' experiences of growing up female in a male world may be very different from those of their minority clients.<sup>30</sup>

The culture's view of what is "pretty", "sexy", "masculine", or "independent" may touch a Black woman's life very differently. Black women have historically been defined as "not" pretty, perhaps "too" sexy, too independent, and "castrating matriarchs"--taking over her [sic] man's role when she was forced to support her family. (Trotman, 1984, p. 106)

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<sup>30</sup>I shall accept Worell & Remer's (1992) description of an '*ethnic minority*' as an ethnic group which experiences low social status, pervasive discrimination, and powerlessness within the dominant culture . . . The concept of minority refers not to relative numbers, but to relative degree of oppression and powerlessness within the dominant culture" (p. 280).

Thus to be effective in working with Black clients, White feminist music therapists must learn, as far as this is possible, what it means to grow up Black and female in a White male culture.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine this topic--to explore the meaning of growing up Black and female, identifying the basic issues with which I and other White feminist music therapists need to be familiar in order to be culturally literate for our Black clients. I write this chapter because each member of the dominant culture must take responsibility for their own cultural literacy, for their own anti-racist development. While White feminist music therapists must, of necessity, become students of Black culture, neither our clients nor other members of the Black community should be held responsible for our teaching.

It is inappropriate for progressive or liberal White people to expect warriors in brown armor to eradicate racism. There must be co-responsibility from people of color and White people to equally work on this issue. It is not just MY responsibility to point out and educate about racist activities and beliefs. (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 51)

Yet, in taking responsibility for my own cultural literacy, I must take care not to speak for or instead of others.

Some white people who take up multicultural and cultural plurality issues mean well, but often they push to the fringes once more the very cultures and ethnic groups about whom they want to disseminate knowledge. For example, the White writing about Native peoples or cultures displaces the Native writer and often appropriates the culture instead of proliferating information about it. The difference between appropriation and proliferation is that the first steals and harms;



the second helps heal breaches of knowledge. (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxi)

This chapter is written for myself and for other White feminist music therapists who may find themselves working with Black clients. So as not to appropriate Black culture, I will turn to the articulations of Black women themselves. To help heal the breach of knowledge, I shall first examine Black women's descriptions of their life experiences, touching upon such major issues as the combined impact of racism, sexism, and classism, stereotypes, beauty ideals, family, self-reliance, and work. I shall then explore the effects of these experiences on Black women in terms of internalization and ethnocultural identity. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an examination of the manner in which some Black women's lives are affected by male abuse. It should be noted that, while this chapter examines the jeopardy of being both Black and female in a White male culture, it does not do so with the intention of pathologizing Black women. Not only will the barriers and risks facing Black women be outlined, so too will be the courageous struggles of Black women to overcome these barriers and the sources of strength upon which they draw to do so. It should also be noted that, while there is commonality among Black women's experiences, there is also diversity. In describing Black women's experiences and the effects of these experiences, I shall be describing a range of possibilities and not a set number of eventualities.

## **Black Women's Experiences**

Any discussion of Black women's experiences must start with an understanding of the impact on those experiences of the complex interplay of sexism, racism, and classism

(Burstow, 1992; Lorde, 1984; Rosewater, 1990). While previously the attention of feminist therapists has been focused on the effects of sexism in women's lives, recent attention has been expanded to include two other powerful systems of oppression--racism and classism.

Racism has a profound impact on the lives of Black women living both in the United States and Canada today (Anzaldúa, 1990; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Turner, 1991; Worell & Remer, 1990).<sup>31</sup> While perhaps more subtle today than previously, racism continues to support pervasive economic, social, political, and educational discrimination (Worell & Remer, 1992). Black women grow up in a culture where they are almost entirely excluded from mainstream institutional life, with no power and extremely limited access to the privileges and opportunities accorded their White sisters. Robbed of choice and opportunities, Black women's experiences may include those of frustration, powerlessness, and alienation (Burstow, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). Subject to White European hegemony, Black women have become fluently *bicultural*; in order to survive they have become familiar with and at times learned to adopt the accepted norms of whiteness (Boyd, 1990). While some Canadians might like to think the situation is better in Canada (and certainly the history is different), in reality, racism is also an integral part of the Canadian political and economic system (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

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<sup>31</sup>I shall accept Anzaldúa's (1990) definition of racism as "the systematic and institutionalized mistreatment of one group of people by another based on racial heritage" (p. 22).

Just as Canadian ideologies, policies, and social practices are structured around male and elite values and experiences, they are also rooted in the belief that White people have the right to dominate. Canadians are generally presumed to be White and this is the central reference point of all social institutions. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 19)

Marshall and Vaillancourt (1993) further elaborate on this idea of Canadian '*whiteness*':

A prevalent myth in Canada is that Canadians are White. Regardless of how long women of color have been Canadian, whether their families have been here for generations, whether they were born in Canada or whether they immigrated, they are asked the questions: "Where are you from?" "What is your nationality?". It is assumed to be a non-White is to be a non-Canadian--forever (p. 79)

Yet Black women face not only the jeopardy of racism, but the double jeopardy of racism and sexism. Oppression comes to Black women not only at the hands of White people, but also at the hands of the Black men with whom they share oppression (Burstow, 1992; Greene, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). In the past, Black women were subject to sexism in the American Civil Rights movement and racism in the women's movement (Turner, 1991). Today this tradition continues in Canada as well as the United States; while Black women share racist oppression with Black men and sexist oppression with White women, their situation is unlike either that of Black men or White women.

Yet to describe Black women's situation as a double jeopardy would not be entirely accurate either. The forces of racism and sexism combine such that Black women are disproportionately represented among the poor (Burstow, 1992). Black women occupy an economic position subordinate not only to White men, but also to both White women and Black men (Greene, 1992). Thus Black women contribute disproportionately

to the feminization of poverty. Black women experience not only the lack of power which accompanies poverty, but also the social stigma. Multiple jeopardy would more accurately describe this situation in which Black women's lives are influenced by three systems of oppression--racism, sexism, and classism.

The manner in which these three systems of oppression influence Black women's lives is so complex and interconnected as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle the separate strands of racism, sexism, and classism. Subsequently, Black women face a number of dilemmas not experienced by their White sisters; an awareness and understanding of these dilemmas on the part of White feminist music therapists is an essential prerequisite to therapeutic effectiveness. When examining discrimination in their lives, Black women may be hard pressed to determine the type of discrimination (Trotman, 1984; Worell & Remer, 1992). Is it sexist, racist, or classist? If it is some combination, which is the most significant? In answering these questions, Black women may feel torn in their allegiances (Trotman, 1984). Sharing racist oppression with Black men and sexist oppression with White women, while at the same time suffering discriminatory treatment at the hands of both Black men and White women, the dilemma is not easily solved. Black women receive strong messages from their community to maintain solidarity with Black men, yet at the same time that Black solidarity has not always been reciprocal, failing to include an end to female subordination to Black men (Trotman, 1984). Black women may feel pressured to choose either allegiance with Black men to eliminate racism or allegiance with women to eliminate sexism. It appears that, until recently, neither of these two groups has necessarily felt obliged to choose allegiance with Black women to eliminate

sexism, racism, and classism. Ultimately, in identifying sources of discrimination and allegiance, Black women's responses vary not only from woman to woman, but also from one point in time to another in each woman's life.

In addition to a general understanding of the complex interplay of multiple oppressions, feminist music therapists, in order to be culturally literate, must also have knowledge of some of the specific stereotypes confronting Black women. These powerful and denigrating stereotypes--a direct product of racism, sexism, and classism--serve to dehumanize and devalue Black women (Burstow, 1992; Green, 1992; hooks, 1992; Jewell, 1993; Trotman, 1984; Turner, 1991). While small in number, these stereotypes of Black women are pervasive in their impact.

Of the four major stereotypes, perhaps the most pervasive is that of Mammy (Burstow, 1992; Jewell, 1993). Certainly Mammy, while originating in the United States is a familiar figure in Canada as well. Burstow (1992) describes Mammy as smiling and all-giving, exemplifying the ideal of selflessness for women. The impact of this stereotype in the lives of Black women is not negligible:

If Black is bad and woman is bad, then Black woman is doubly unacceptable.

Conversely, if all women are expected to be all-giving mothers and Black woman is supposed to be "Mammy par excellence", then the individual Black woman with her own needs is necessarily an enormous disappointment. (Burstow, 1992, p. 79)

The image of Mammy is thus used to mandate for Black women the bearing of children and the supporting of men, with no regard for the well-being of women. Jewell (1993) adds further that Mammy exemplifies submissiveness and contentment with her lot in life

as domestic help. While submissive to her owner or her employer (depending on the era), she demonstrates aggressiveness in her interactions with Black men. As well:

She is the antithesis of the American conception of womanhood. She is portrayed as an obese African American woman, of dark complexion, with extremely large breasts and buttocks and shining white teeth displayed in a grin. Most portrayals of Mammy depict her wearing a drab calico dress or the type of uniform worn by domestics. (Jewell, 1993, p. 39)

Jewell contends that this constructed image allows men who accept it to view Black women as content, naturally gifted for domestic work. She also argues that, because Mammy's looks are the antithesis of White femininity, White men are absolved of responsibility for any sexual advances made--Black women must have seduced them.

So powerful is the Mammy stereotype, that from it evolved another well-known stereotype--that of Aunt Jemima. Similar in nature and appearance, Aunt Jemima differs primarily in that her domesticity is limited to the area of cooking.

A Black female stereotype different in nature from that of either Mammy or Aunt Jemima is that of Sapphire or shrew (Burstow, 1992; Jewell, 1993). Named for a 1950's radio and television character, the Sapphire stereotype effectively denigrates the strong woman. She warns Black women of the dangers of being strong, for she is the '*castrating bitch*' who emasculates her husband and who is ultimately responsible for his inability to get or keep a job, for his failure to support his family, and in the end for his desertion of the family. This stereotype is still alive and well today where it is seen in the blaming of Black women for the creation of dysfunctional families by as diverse groups as Black men, television talk show hosts, and mental health professionals.

A final stereotype is that of Black woman as *'lascivious beast'*--sometimes referred to as Jezebel or simply the *'bad Black girl'* (hooks, 1992; Jewell, 1993; Burstow, 1992). This is the image of Black woman at best as seductress and at worst as sexual subhuman creature. It has been used to justify sexual violence of both White and Black men. With physical features more similar to those of the White beauty ideal, "she fulfills the sex objectification of White womanhood" (Jewell, 1993, p. 46).

These stereotypes of Black women can have very harmful effects not only in the way Black women are perceived and treated by others, but also in the way they perceive and treat themselves. Given the extremely derogatory nature of some of them, it should be understandable that some women might adhere to the least offensive in order to escape the worst (Burstow, 1992). For example, the Black woman as selfless Superwoman (a modern-day version of Mammy) would certainly appear more appealing than some of the other stereotypes.

Having as equally powerful an impact in Black women's lives as that of stereotypes, is the issue of beauty (Burstow, 1992; Green, 1992; Johnson, 1983; Steinem, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). The beauty ideal, while difficult for all women, is almost impossible for Black women. Both Canadian and American cultures judge beauty according to Caucasian norms. To be beautiful is to have blue eyes, fair skin, blonde, silky hair, and a straight nose. "All African American little girls grow up bombarded by images of women with blue eyes, lily white skin, and flowing blond hair" (Burstow, 1992, p. 82). To be beautiful is to be white. The oppression of the White beauty ideal is powerful and plays a role in such *'beauty practices'* as hair bleaching and hair straightening. It is

powerful enough to be internalized and this is sometimes reflected in discrimination within Black families and within the Black community based on skin color, hair texture, body size and shape, and facial features (Burstow, 1992; Green, 1992; Johnson, 1983; Turner, 1991; Steinem, 1992; Worell & Remer, 1992). Even though Black models are now increasing in popularity (the new trend being '*exotic*' models), they are simply being rewarded for approaching the Caucasian beauty standards. The Black models achieving the status of '*supermodel*' are those with lighter skin and more European features. Societal messages to Black women growing up in Canada and the United States continue to be strong and consistent--to be beautiful, be White! The struggle to be freed of this White beauty ideal is not an easy one, but the cost of failure is too great. For many Black women, the failure to meet the White beauty ideal has a negative impact not only on their feelings of attractiveness, but also on their feelings of self-worth, intelligence, and success. However, in the struggle against the White beauty ideal, the fruits of success--perhaps with the guidance of a feminist music therapist--could be wonderful. In the words of the poet Omosupe (1990, p. 169):



### **In Magazines (I Found Specimens of the Beautiful)**

Once	honey colored, bronzed skin
I looked for myself	a mouth with thick lips
between the covers of	bowed painted red
Seventeen	smiled purple gums and shining pearls
Cosmopolitan	I turned to leave
Among blues eyes, blonde hair, white skin,	but this body
thin bodies,	of curvaceous hips
this is beauty.	strong thighs
I hated this shroud of	broad ass
Blackness	long legs
That makes me invisible	called me back to look again at likenesses of
a negative print	African Queens, Dahomey Warriors,
some other one's	Statuesque Goddesses
nightmare	I stand outside those covers meet
In a storefront window	Face to Face
against a white backdrop	Myself
I saw a queenly head of nappy hair	I am Beautiful
and met this chiseled face	
wide, wondering eyes,	

In counteracting the harmful effects of the beauty ideal, Black stereotypes, and other forms of systemic oppression, one of the strongest sources of support for Black women can be found in the family (Burstow, 1992; Greene, 1990; Turner, 1991).

Characterized by strong ties and role flexibility, the Black family can provide love, stability, and power for coping (Greene, 1990). In describing the importance of family in the Black community, Greene (1990) notes that, while the philosophy reflected in "I think therefore I am" might resonate for White people, the philosophy of "I am because we are" would resonate much more strongly for Black people.

In addition to being a source of connection and strength, the family is also the primary location--and Black mothers the primary agents--of what Greene (1990) refers to

as *'Black racial socialization'*. It is within the family that Black children first learn about their ethnocultural identity. Through racial socialization, mothers must not only teach their children what it means to be Black, but must also prepare them to survive in an oppressive culture. Burstow (1992) refers to this process as a tough/toughening education in which Black children must learn to live in a White culture without becoming White; Black children must become bicultural--familiar with and fluent in the ways of the majority culture yet without internalizing them (Greene, 1990). Because the dangers for Black children growing up in a racist culture are considerable, discipline can, at times, be strict. Because the dangers for Black girls growing up in a racist and sexist culture are even greater, discipline can, at times, be even more severe. Turner (1991) sees this as partly responsible for possible tensions between Black mothers and their daughters. A common lesson to young Black girls through this racial socialization is to be quiet; this lesson is doubly reinforced because of the importance of being *'ladylike'* and being *'less objectionable'* (read submissive) to White people. As well, young Black girls are taught the impropriety of being angry, for not only is it not *'ladylike'*, it is also proscribed by the stereotypes of Sapphire and Mammy. Of course, the nature of the racial socialization process will vary from woman to woman, depending on differences in experiences of racism and sexism and on degree of similarity in skin tone and physical features between mother and daughter, as well as on degree of internalization of racism, sexism, and classism.

In discussing the Black family, it is important to note that, while it can be a source of strength, it can also be a source of conflict because of the possibility of internalization.

While it can be a source of support, the family can also be a source of negative judgment (Greene, 1990). Measured against an idealized White standard with an assumption of adequate financial resources, the Black family has been judged by some and found wanting. Similarly, measured against the idealized White standard of motherhood, the Black mother has been found wanting by some. Held entirely responsible for the family well-being, Black mothers are blamed by some for what is ultimately the unavoidable results of institutionalized racism. Drawing upon their strength to meet the responsibility of the family's well-being, at times without the support of a husband, Black women have been accused by some of being domineering matriarchs. Measured against the White standard of childhood as a protected developmental period, Black children--with 50% living in poverty, as compared with 20% of White children--have been labelled by some as dysfunctional. Thus while the family can be a source of strength and support for Black women, it has also been the site of much unfair criticism.

At the root of the criticisms of Black women lies one of their strengths--self-reliance. Black women are criticized for being strong because they are indeed strong and women are not supposed to be strong. Despite this, Black women are raised from an early age on to be self-reliant, independent, and successful (Brody, 1984; Turner, 1991). Because of this, Brody (1984) believes that for Black women achievement is not as incompatible with femininity as it is for their White sisters; Brody does, however, wonder whether this will change as Black women continue to break racial barriers and move up the corporate ladder of success.

The emphasis on self-reliance for Black women combines with the socioeconomic barriers they face to create another way in which their experiences may differ from those of White, middle class women. Black women have always worked--they have always had to work. Subsequently, they have been socialized to expect to support themselves and their family and to value education as a route to do this more successfully (Burstow, 1992; Green, 1990). Of course, racism and sexism have limited the nature of the work available to Black women. Yet they have not been raised to view marriage as an escape route from work or as economic security. In light of this, the assumption that work outside the home liberates women is oppressive (Burstow, 1992). Feminist music therapists would be wise to be aware of the complex nature of this issue for Black women, understanding that not just *any* kind of work outside the home will liberate Black women.

In this section of the chapter, I have explored a number of experiences common to Black women's lives. Some of these experiences have differed considerably from those of many White women, just as some of these experiences have differed from one Black woman to another. Included among those experiences explored have been the interplay of racism, sexism, and classism, the major stereotypes of Black women, the beauty ideal, the family, self-reliance, and work issues. While the impact on Black women's lives of each of these experiences has been touched upon briefly, their combined impact will be examined more thoroughly in the section which follows. This combined impact will be explored in specific terms of four major effects--internalization, woman and race hatred, Black rage, and ethnocultural identification.

## **The Combined Effects of Black Women's Experiences**

One of the most significant dangers for Black women growing up in a White male culture is that of the internalization of racism, sexism, and classism (Anzaldúa, 1990; Barrett, 1990; Boyd, 1990; Bricker-Jenkins, Hooyman, & Gottlieb, 1991; Childs, 1990; Greene, 1992; Hertzberg, 1990; hooks, 1992; Johnson, 1983; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Rosewater, 1990; Smith, 1983; Tijerina, 1990; Trotman, 1984; Turner, 1991). Bombarded with a lifetime of racist, sexist, and classist beliefs, Black women run the risk of, in time, coming to believe them themselves. In the words of one Black woman: "We take from the oppressor the instruments of hatred and sharpen them on our bodies and our souls" (Tijerina, 1990, p. 172). Given the extent and nature of the oppressive forces against Black women, this internalization should not be surprising. "How many Black women, in the course of our lives, could unequivocally withstand the assaults on our very existence? . . . Is it coincidence that Black women on Welfare learn to be ashamed, isolated, and silent?" (Johnson, 1983, pp. 322-323). This internalized oppression can result in invalidation of one's perceptions, denial of one's experiences, and minimalization of one's cultural identity (Hertzberg, 1990). Ultimately, it can lead to a damaged sense of self-worth, self-doubt concerning one's intelligence and success, self-degradation, and self-hatred (Anzaldúa, 1990; Johnson, 1983; Trotman, 1984). In describing growing up being Black and Latina, one woman remarked: " . . . it's like being given a cannonball and being asked to run with it. Except that you're also told that you don't have the ability to do it, that it can't be done" (Smith, 1983, pp. 31-32). This internalization is reflected in diminished self-confidence, conflicts over skin color, hair texture, and other physical

features, voluntary mutilation of bodies, attempts to *'pass as White'* (Anzaldúa, 1990; Johnson, 1983; Rosewater, 1990), and a heightened sense of the imposter phenomenon in some Black women (Trotman, 1984).<sup>32</sup> The inner harm caused by Black women's experiences of racism, sexism, and classism should not be minimized; for some, its elimination is seen as an essential part of the elimination of all oppression (Anzaldúa, 1990; Boyd, 1990; hooks, 1992; Tijerina, 1990). "The real battle with such oppression for all of us begins under the skin" (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 30). hooks (1992) believes that "Black people . . . are empowered when we practice self-love as revolutionary intervention that undermines practices of domination" (p. 20).

The elimination of the internalization of oppression is essential not only for individual women, but for all Black women; the end result of this internalization includes not only self-hatred, but also hatred of all things Black and female (Burstow, 1992; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Turner, 1991). This is reflected at times in the situation in which Black women are seen to be hypercritical of other Black women.

We women have a similar nightmare, for each of us in some way has been both oppressed and oppressor . . . [we have] taken the values of our oppressor into our hearts and turned them against ourselves and one another. (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 32).

Hating ourselves, we learn to hate others like us; loving ourselves, we not only love others, but receive in turn love and support which makes it easier to love ourselves.

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<sup>32</sup>Trotman (1984) defines the imposter phenomenon as "an internal experience of intellectual phoniness" (p. 96).

A very different result of Black women's experiences in a White world (although one with which White feminist music therapists must be equally familiar) is that of Black rage against the White oppressor. Given the extensive and pervasive nature of racism in both Canada and the United States, this Black rage is certainly understandable. It is likely to be an issue which might arise for any Black woman in feminist music therapy. For White feminist music therapists, it is essential to understand that they are the oppressor. As such, it will be difficult, yet essential, to avoid being defensive; rather the issue must be dealt with openly and honestly (Rosewater, 1990). On the other hand, White feminist music therapists, tending to be less demonstrative in nature, must be careful not to misperceive a Black woman's assertiveness and banter as anger (Burstow, 1992).

The sum total of a Black woman's experiences and the effect of those experiences combine to determine her ethnocultural identity. Simply put, a woman's ethnocultural identity refers to her feelings about her ethnicity and about others' response to it (Turner, 1991). It can be a great source of love, support, power, and coping for Black women. Yet it is important to note that ethnocultural identity differs from one Black woman to another, and from one point in time to another in each woman's life (Worell & Remer, 1992).

In describing a woman's ethnocultural identity, Worell and Remer (1992) delineate five stages of development: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, internalization, and internalization/commitment. The pre-encounter stage involves assimilation by the dominant culture with a resultant negative self-image. At the encounter stage, Black women become aware of and angry about their oppression. The immersion stage is

characterized by increasing pride in ethnicity and continued hostility towards the dominant culture. Black women at the internalization stage will have successfully integrated the perspective of their own ethnic group and that of the dominant culture. By the internalization/commitment stage, this integration of perspectives continues, but is accompanied by an increasingly active involvement in seeking positive community change.

Given, on one hand, the potential of one's ethnocultural identity as a source of strength and support, and, on the other hand, the potential of racism, sexism, and classism to harm one's ethnocultural identity, Worell and Remer (1992) recognize ethnocultural identity as one of *the* major issues for therapists working with Black women. Exploring a woman's ethnocultural identity can enable the White therapist to more clearly understand her client's perspective. In addition, it can allow the client the opportunity to explore her sources of strength as well as the possible sources of harm for her as a Black woman living in a White male culture. The client's stage of ethnocultural development will partly determine her attitudes about herself, about her experiences, and about working with a White therapist. In the end, integration of her ethnocultural heritage and reaffirmation of her value as a woman should build her self-esteem, increase her coping abilities in the face of continued oppression, and ultimately empower her.

In this section of the chapter, I have examined in detail some of the specific effects of growing up Black and female in a White male culture. Particular attention has been given to the internalization of oppression and its resulting devaluation of self, of gender, and of race. The impact of these on the development of ethnocultural identity by Black women in general has also been explored. In the section which follows, the focus shall be



directed towards the particular perspectives of Black women who are abused by their intimate male partners.

### **Black Women Who Are Abused By Their Male Partners**

Just as experiences of Black women differ from those of women from different ethnocultural groups, so too do the experiences and nature of violence differ for Black abused women (Coley & Beckett, 1988; Ho, 1990; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Rosewater, 1990). Until recently however, the analysis of male abuse of women has been almost exclusively monocultural (Coley & Beckett, 1988; Ho, 1990). With the focus of attention expanded to include non-White women has come recognition that abused women's experiences are textured by racism and classism, as well as by sexism (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). While Rosewater (1990) found that the experience of violence is a more powerful variable than race, she also found race to have a powerful impact on the nature of that experience. Racism and classism interact with sexism to influence not only the attitudes, roles, and actions of abused women, but also those of their abusive male partners and those of people involved in the various community services (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

In examining the attitudes, roles, and actions of Black women who are abused, it is important to be aware of some powerful myths confronting these women. One popularly-held myth maintains that Black women, especially poor, Black women, are more likely to be abused (Coley & Beckett, 1988; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). The reality is that woman abuse crosses all racial and socioeconomic barriers, however the myth serves to

make it difficult for Black women to seek or receive assistance. If abuse of Black women is *'normal'*, then why should one seek assistance? And if assistance were to be sought, to whom could one turn? According to another myth, Black women are less likely to terminate an abusive relationship. In reality, the difficulty lies not in their unwillingness to terminate abusive relationships, but, for some, in their lesser access to support and economic self-sufficiency. In reality, like their White counterparts, Black women who are abused may exhibit great strength at times, as well as despair in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles. Black women who are abused do differ from their White sisters in that more find themselves in the lowest socioeconomic strata; they also hold very little societal power, being largely excluded from most sociopolitical structures in Canada and the United States. Subsequently, for these women, violence can be much harder to escape (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). As well, Black women differ in that their bruises tend to show less (Rosewater, 1990). For Black women, as for White women, there is great pressure to show a *'red badge of courage'* in order to be deemed *'worthy'* of assistance.

A very powerful societal message to all women who are abused is to never break the silence. This unspoken code to *'stand by your man'* can be reinforced for Black women by the strong family ties typical of some Black families (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). To break the silence is to betray your man. This code of silence is further reinforced by strong ties to the Black community. For some, identification as a Black person is stronger than identification as a woman, further blurring the problem. To break the silence is to betray not only your man, but your race as well

(Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). When faced with a forced choice between racism or sexism, Black women may feel pressured to choose racism. In this manner, many excuse Black male violence against Black women as an expression of the stress of racial oppression, rather than as male control of women. Indeed, the powerful Black feminist writer, bell hooks (1992b) argues that Black male violence against Black women is "an expression of perverted power relations, general lack of control over one's actions, emotional powerlessness, extreme irrationality, and in many cases outright insanity" (p. 75). In the words of another Black woman, "capitalism has left the Black man only his penis for fulfillment and a curious rage" (Lorde, 1984, p. 62). I believe, however, that racism should not be used to excuse or permit misogyny. While the impact of racism cannot be ignored, neither should one ignore the powerful societal messages telling all men that women are suitable objects of violence, hatred, and rage. Lorde (1984) also makes this point in asking:

Is this rage [Black male rage] any more legitimate than the rage of Black women? And why are Black women supposed to absorb that male rage in silence? . . . In this country, Black women traditionally have had compassion for everybody else except ourselves. (p. 62)

A final factor reinforcing the code of silence for Black women is found in one of the messages of the racial socialization process--do not trust the White community and, therefore, never seek assistance from authorities (Boyd, 1990; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). In the words of one woman: "You don't trust nobody two shades lighter than Black" (Boyd, 1990, p. 154). The dangers of breaking this is threefold: danger of eliciting a harmful racist response directed towards the woman herself (or her

children), danger of eliciting a harmful racist response directed towards her husband, and danger of losing public sympathy and support in the struggle against racism. "If some men of color abuse their *'own'* women, the thinking goes, why should Whites worry about how they discriminate against all people of color?" (Dobash & Dobash, 1992, p. 54).

In exploring the experiences of Black women who are abused by their male partners, the impact of racism, sexism, and classism on community response should not be overlooked. For many abused women in Canada and the United States, assistance is limited--as outlined previously-- because of pervasive, institutionalized sexism in all areas (legal, medical, mental health care, and other social services systems). This situation can be exacerbated for Black women because of the attitudinal and systemic barriers created by profound race and class bias (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993; Doran, 1992; Rosewater, 1990). These barriers can take the form of racist treatment by service providers, or simple insensitivity to the different needs of Black women. The interaction of racism, classism, and sexism can also result in providing Black women with inadequate care or in deterring many from seeking assistance in the first place. It can be seen in the failure to intervene in cases of male abuse of Black women because *'that's just how they are'* (Doran, 1992). It can be seen in the failure to recognize abuse because bruises are less visible. It can also be seen in the overprescription of tranquillizers for Black women. Ultimately it can deter some Black women from seeking assistance for fear of losing custody of their children. This fear is firmly based in reality. Abused women in general, perceived as *'crazy'* by virtue of their label of battered woman syndrome, have been found wanting when measured against the ideal of motherhood. Black women who are abused are at even

greater risk since they have never met the White, middle class standards of ideal motherhood by virtue of their race and their socioeconomic status. Rather than receiving assistance in seeking escape from violence for themselves and their children, some abused Black women are blamed for failing to protect their children and subsequently they lose child custody (Doran, 1992). Thus the complex interplay of racism, classism, and sexism has a powerful impact on the attitudes, roles, and actions of Black women who are abused, as it does on those of their abusers and their *'rescuers'*.

In this chapter, the meaning of growing up Black and female in a White male culture has been carefully examined. Written by a White therapist and for other White therapists intending to work with Black women, this chapter turned to the voices of Black women themselves to learn more fully about their experiences. The pattern created by those women's voices was explored as they alternated between unison and contrapuntal passages. While characterized by commonality, Black women's experiences have been seen to also be characterized by diversity, varying from woman to woman, as well as from one point in time to another in each woman's life. The pattern of many Black women's lives has shown to be textured by the interaction of multiple oppressions--racism, sexism, and classism. Some specific issues facing many Black women have been explored, including stereotypes of Black women, beauty ideals, the importance of family, the nurturing of self-reliance, and the necessity of work. The combination of these experiences and the interconnected oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism has been shown to place Black women in multiple jeopardy. The risks of internalization, and hatred of race and gender have been shown to be considerable. Specific experiences of Black women who are

abused by their intimate male partners have also been examined, identifying the manner in which the multiple jeopardy of racism, sexism, and classism puts them at further risk. Yet Black women's multiple strengths, not just their risks, have also been explored--the support from strong family ties, the nurturance of self-reliance, and the development of a strong and positive ethnocultural identity.

For Black abused women seeking assistance, White feminist music therapists must be aware of both the sources of strengths and the sources of risks. Black women who are abused by their intimate male partners have the right to demand such culturally-literate treatment. For feminist therapists, the goal has always been to empower women through honoring each woman's perspective, each woman's unique voice. For White feminist music therapists working with Black women, the goal should be no less--to honor the perspectives of each of their Black clients, to understand and celebrate the differences.

### **13. White Therapists Working with Native Clients**

As has been shown in previous chapters, for White feminist therapists to work effectively with women of different backgrounds, they must become culturally literate. This is no less true of White therapists intending to work with Native clients (Burstow, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Indeed the task of developing cultural literacy in the area of Native values and experiences might be even greater than that in the area of Black culture. However ignorant White therapists are of the Black experience, I believe they are even more so of the Native experience. Unlike the earlier Black pride movement, interest in and appreciation for Native customs have been extremely recent and, to date, of a much smaller-scale and shorter-term nature. Subsequently the development of Native cultural literacy is a most urgent task for White therapists.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify basic issues facing Native women with which I and other White feminist therapists need to be familiar in order to be culturally literate. As with the previous chapter addressing Black cultural literacy, there are certain inherent limitations in a White woman undertaking such a task. While I write this chapter because I must take responsibility for the development of my own cultural literacy, I must take care not to speak for or instead of Native women. Subsequently, I shall turn in this chapter, whenever possible, to the voices and stories of Native women themselves. It must

be stressed that the purpose in looking at Native women's experiences is not to pathologize Native women. This chapter shall examine both their sources of jeopardy and their sources of strength. Native women, like their Black sisters, are struggling to overcome considerable obstacles with much courage and success.

It must also be stressed that although Native women's experiences are characterized by commonality, they are also characterized by great diversity. Burstow (1992) maintains that in the case of Native women, cultural literacy must involve not only familiarity with Native ways in general, but also familiarity with the culture of the specific Native nation of the individual woman. Because there are so many different Native nations--53 in Canada alone (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993)--familiarity with only those of the women specifically seen in therapy by individual White therapists is sufficient .

Of the participants involved in the clinical part of this dissertation, only one was a Native woman. She described herself as one-quarter Indian, with some Cherokee heritage and other unknown Native heritage. She grew up in the dominant White culture, disconnected from any Native community. She became interested in her roots only as an adult and was subsequently unfamiliar with the norms and values of any specific Native nation. Because of this background of the only Native participant, in this chapter I shall explore the issues of Native cultural literacy only in general terms, without reference to any specific Native nations.

To most effectively explore the issues of general Native cultural literacy, in this chapter I shall first examine Native women's descriptions of their life experiences, touching upon such major themes as the complex interaction of the multiple oppressions of sexism,



racism, and classism, the history of the oppression of Native people in Canada and the United States, the stereotyping of Native women, the values of Native cultures and community, and the role of the family. I shall then explore the effects of these experiences on Native women, in terms of internalization and of violence against and within the Native community. Finally, the chapter shall conclude with an examination of the manner in which some Native women's lives are affected by intimate male abuse.

## **Native Women's Experiences**

As with their Black sisters, Native women's lives have been circumscribed not by a single oppression, but by the complex interaction of multiple oppressions (Burstow, 1992; Maracle, 1988; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Native women must struggle in their daily lives against the harm of sexism, racism, classism, and '*Christianism*'.<sup>33</sup> While these individual forms of oppression can be identified, their interconnection is so complex and intimate that it can be difficult, if not impossible to disentangle the separate strands. It becomes impossible to identify a single oppression as *the* overriding oppression. As a result, Native women may experience torn allegiances. Should they struggle with Native men to eliminate racism or should they struggle with women to eliminate sexism? Native women find themselves disadvantaged in the White community because of race and sex; they find themselves disadvantaged in the Native community because of sex.

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<sup>33</sup>I use this term to describe the oppression by those who believe in the supremacy of Christianity, the eradication of all other faiths, and the absolute necessity of *converting* non-Christians to Christianity at any cost.

The combined effects of racism and sexism in Native women's lives are such that severe poverty is a fact of life for many (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Subsequently the third oppression of classism becomes intimately enmeshed with that of racism and sexism. The living conditions for many Native women, in both Canada and the United States, are more similar to those of *'underdeveloped countries'*. Indeed, while the United Nations recently identified Canada as the best country in which to live, when the living conditions of Native Canadians were considered, Canada dropped to eighth place (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Not only have the Canadian and American governments failed to eliminate this devastating poverty, they have actually contributed to it. Decades of racist treatment, paternalistic laws, and bureaucratic thinking have resulted in much welfare dependency, effectively undermining self-sufficiency and Native community (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

The long history of White oppression of Native peoples has been a devastating, yet silent, one. Despite its pervasive impact in Native lives, many Whites remain ignorant of it. Subsequently, some crucial issues in the history of the treatment of Native peoples shall be outlined here. Historically in most Native nations, women were greatly valued; in many Native nations, the patriarchal subordination of women to men was not the norm; in some Native nations, women found themselves in positions of authority and leadership; (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). The White European invasion of North America heralded the beginning of a devastating erosion of all Native culture, including the replacement of traditional matriarchy with White patriarchy. Native women's rights and powers, even their very value, slowly yet surely diminished through such White practices

as the legal definition of women as male property, the denial of *'Indian status'* to Native women (not men) marrying non-Natives (as well as to their children), and the establishment of residential schools. These practices, and their underlying racist and sexist philosophy, undermined not only women's position in the Native community, but the very being of Native community itself. The establishment of residential schools legalized the forced removal of Native children from their homes and community to a distant facility with the purpose of removing the *'Indian within'*. Native children were subsequently robbed of their families, their community, their way of life and spiritual practices, their language, their bodies (many were physically and sexually abused), and, for some, their spirit (all were emotionally abused, taught that Natives and Native ways were hateful). Native women were robbed of their children, of their valued roles of mother and grandmother. Native communities, with the removal of their children, were robbed of their future. Other legal acts, in similar vein, robbed Native women, children, and men of their connection to their land, bringing poverty and welfare dependency. The oppressive and relentless nature of the historic White treatment of Native people is perhaps most accurately reflected in the words of the Indian Act of 1876 of Canada, whose purpose was "to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department" (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 145). Racism, in the case of Blacks, resulted in attempts to enslave a people. In the case of Natives, it resulted in attempts to eradicate a people.

Evolving directly out of this history of multiple oppressions is a plethora of stereotypes, some obviously negative and harmful, others more seemingly positive, yet

stereotypes still the same, rather than reality. These stereotypes are maintained at the individual level, as well as the systemic level where it is seen in such visual media as Hollywood movies and television series. The more obviously negative stereotypes include such views of Natives as savages, heathen, alcoholics, lazy, barbaric, and frightening. The seemingly positive stereotypes picture Natives as the *Noble Savage*, spiritual, and connected to the earth. While appearing more positive at first glance, these are still stereotypes, serving to limit the views of and possibilities for Natives. The impact of these stereotypes is incredibly pervasive. How many White children have not played Cowboys and Indians at some time during their childhood?

Given this overabundance of stereotypes and the resulting White ignorance of true Native culture, attention shall next be directed to the specific values and ways of being for Natives. How these might differ from those of the dominant White culture and what this means for feminist therapists shall also be examined.

For many Natives, great importance is placed on community. This contrasts greatly with the rugged individualism of the dominant White culture in the United States and, to a slightly lesser degree, with that of Canada. Subsequently in therapy Natives' issues of connectedness and recognition of community elders as a source of support become essential (Anzaldúa, 1990; Burstow, 1992; Maracle, 1988). As well, Natives' sense of community and deep respect for all beings lead to an approach of non-interference, rather than that of confrontation typical of many traditional therapies. This also accounts for Native valuing of accommodation rather than change or challenge. This accommodation can be of great value in interaction with those of like mind. Unfortunately, when face to

face with the patriarchal philosophy of domination, it has at times resulted for Natives in "accommodating one's own subjugation" (Burstow, 1992, p. 73). Subsequently, feminist therapists may at times be called on to walk the fine line of valuing Native ways of accommodation, while at the same time recognizing the importance of non-accommodation in cases of oppression and abuse (Burstow, 1992).

Equally at odds with the dominant White culture is Native focus on spirituality. In therapy, as in much of daily life, the dominant White culture embraces the secular (Buffalo, 1990; Burstow, 1992; Maracle, 1988). Native spirituality involves not only one's relationship with a higher power, but also the relationship between body and spirit. For Natives, the saying that "the spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak" has no meaning; rather human spirit and body are indivisible (Maracle, 1988).

Native views of well-being itself differ from those of the dominant White culture. For many Natives, healing is seen as a "return to" rather than "progress towards" (Burstow, 1992). How healing is approached is also influenced by Natives' ways of knowing. Unlike the dominant White (and I would add male) ways of knowing and thinking which emphasize linear logic, Native ways (similar to women's ways) embrace circular and allegorical thinking (Buffalo, 1990; Burstow, 1992; Maracle, 1988). Rather than counseling through explicit clarification, confrontation, and directedness, feminist therapists might find a focus on the implicit, on communication through imagery, story, and allegory to have greater resonance for their Native clients. Maracle (1988) elaborates that for Natives, story is "the language of the people". This has great significance for

feminist music therapy, using as it does songs which also embrace imagery, story, and allegory.

It is not possible to address Native values and culture without touching upon the importance of family. It is at the heart of Native community. It involves not just the dominant culture's '*nuclear family*', but also an extended family which has its roots in the traditional clan system of Native ancestors. Furthermore, Native family is valued, not for its material success, but for its contributions to the community. Native family can be a great source of support in the struggle against oppression. It should be noted that it can also be a source of great conflict. Solidarity (as shall be explored further later) within the family and within the extended family may make disclosure of violence and requests for outside assistance extremely difficult, if not impossible (Burstow, 1992). As well, the importance of family can reinforce the message to women in general that the needs of the family and the children outweigh those of the woman.

## **The Combined Effects of Native Women's Experiences**

The multiple oppressions facing Natives have been shown to rob them of many of their ways of life. Perhaps more harmful, however, is the manner in which these oppressions combine to convince Whites and Natives alike that White ways are the normal ways (Anzaldúa, 1990; Burstow, 1992). The corollary to this is, of course, that Native ways are abnormal. This internalization of oppression can be devastating. To be believed by others to be less valued, less than human is one thing; to come to believe it about oneself is quite another. As seen in previous chapters, the lesson of self-hatred, taught as it

is to Natives from their childhood through adulthood, can be particularly harmful. For Native women, this lesson involves not only hatred of all that is Native, but also of all that is female. The end result has been dispossession of their roles of leadership in their own nation, as well as dispossession of their very belief in their rights to and ability in such leadership roles (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

Some contend that centuries of White oppression and Native internalization of this oppression, violence directed against the Native community, have resulted in violence within the community (Burstow, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Certainly today violence within the Native community is a reality for many, particularly for Native women and children. They are subject to multiple abuses at the hands of those who profess to love them. Despite a paucity of research, preliminary indications are that the incidence of violence within the Native community, particularly that directed against Native women, is strikingly higher than that in non-Native communities. In Ontario, 8 out of 10 Native women have personally experienced violence (as opposed to 1 out of 2 women in the general Canadian population), with 87% being injured physically, and 57% being sexually abused (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). As children, wives, mothers, and elders, Native women are being abused with little help offered from either the Native community or the dominant White community. If this is the experience of Native women in general, what of those Native women who are abused by their intimate male partners?

## **Native Women Who are Abused by their Male Partners**

Just as Native women's experiences differ from those of their White and Black sisters, so too do the experiences of Native women who are abused by their male partners differ. With similar underlying issues of inequality, misogyny, and control, the nature and extent of Native women's experiences of abuse are textured by racism, classism, and Christianity. Just as the incidence of violence in general is considerably higher within the Native community than within the White community, so too is the incidence of Native women abused by their male partners considerably higher than that of non-Native women. Of Native women in urban locations, 71% had been abused by their intimate male partners; for Native women of the Oneida reserve, the figure was 48%, with that for Native women in remote northern Native communities being an estimated 75 to 90% (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993).

The impact of multiple oppressions for Native women, however, is not limited simply to prevalence. It is pervasive, influencing the attitudes, roles, and actions of the abuser, of abused women, and of the people to whom abused women turn for help.

For Native women, seeking assistance is difficult because disclosure of violence within their family is seen as a betrayal of the Native community. It also risks exposing the abuser, the woman, and her children to possible racist treatment. Like their Black sisters, Native women risk loss of custody of their children at the hands of a social services system which compares them to White, urban, middle-class ideals of motherhood, ignoring completely the realities of racism and poverty (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). The *'help'* received by Native women may be as harmful as the original abuse. As well, Native



women's access to assistance may be limited by something as simple as geographic isolation. In the words of one Native woman:

My ex-husband was violent. When I married him, I had to leave my home reserve. I felt so isolated. He intercepted my mail for 7 years. My family didn't even know where I was. It was like someone took a giant eraser and wiped me from the face of the map. It nearly destroyed me. (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 153)

Similarly, Native women seeking help through the White legal system are confronted with racism which ignores or trivializes their experiences. Native women also find themselves confronted with a system rooted in concepts of crime and punishment which are entirely alien to their ways (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Yet Native women do not find the Native system any better. "While the Canadian justice system is ineffective at ending violence and achieving equality, many Aboriginal women are equally suspicious of a separate Aboriginal justice system" (Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993, p. 169).

Awareness of these particularities of Native women's experiences of abuse, as well as of their general experiences, is essential for effective counseling. It is important for White feminist therapists to neither ignore cultural differences on the one hand, nor co-opt Native ways on the other hand (Burstow, 1992). They must be able to respect Native ways and styles, while enabling Native women to examine for themselves sources of conflict as a result of the complex interaction of oppressions and the internalization of these oppressions. At the same time, feminist therapists must be aware of the centrality of Native community and possible sources of support for Native women within their own community (Burstow, 1992; Marshall & Vaillancourt, 1993). Burstow (1992) and Buffalo (1990) further encourage feminist therapists working with Native women to tap into the

resources of imagery, stories, and metaphors --powerful resources because of both their richness and their ambiguity. Maracle (1988) concurs, stressing the potential for resistance and empowerment through use of story and poetry. This underscores the potential power of feminist music therapy which uses poetry and story in song as its basic tools of the trade. Not only can feminist music therapy be used, if done in a culturally-sensitive manner, it might indeed be a more appropriate vehicle for Native clients than traditional verbal counseling. Maracle (1988) goes further to say that starting first with the empowerment of self through story and poetry, it is easy to move next to the empowerment of every Native woman once given the opportunity to experience these stories and poems.

In this second section of the dissertation, feminist music therapy has been explored in all its potential diversity. The feminist transformation of traditional music therapy theory and practice has been outlined in detail. The identified goals and principles of feminist music therapy have served as the basis for the development of specific music therapy techniques to be used to empower women. Feminist music therapy has great potential for women in its analysis of power and its recognition of the commonality of women's experiences. It must also recognize the diversity of women's experiences, honoring each individual woman's voice as it at times blends in unison and at other times forms a rich and complex harmony with other women's voices. To so honor individual women's voices, feminist music therapists must develop cultural literacy for those with whom they will work. The nature of this cultural literacy has been examined in general terms, for ultimately all therapists will find ways in which their experiences differ, despite their

commonality, from those of their clients. Cultural literacy has also been examined in specific terms (for purposes of the clinical component of this dissertation) for White therapists intending to work with African American and Native American women.

In the third and final section of this dissertation, opportunity will be given to hear the actual voices of individual women in feminist music therapy. Through an analysis of a number of case studies, women's voices shall be heard as, through feminist music therapy, they tell their stories and sing their songs of subversion and empowerment.

## Section III

### Women's Voices

## **14. Women's Voices in Feminist Music Therapy**

This final section of the dissertation shall examine the actual experiences of women within feminist music therapy. It shall outline the steps taken in an attempt to answer the research question: Is feminist music therapy effective in the empowerment of women who have been abused by their intimate male partners?

To best answer this question, analysis of the effects of feminist music therapy was accomplished through a case-study approach. The rationale for this was twofold. The demands of experimental, quantitative research could not be met at the women's shelters chosen for this study. As a direct result of the many uncertainties of life typically experienced by women in community shelters, many of the participants left the shelter suddenly and unexpectedly prior to the completion of this study. Subsequently the total number of women who were able to complete the study was extremely limited. As well, the traditional quantitative approach, as a sole approach to research, has been criticized by feminist researchers for its failure to allow the full, contextualized richness and complexities of women's voices to be heard (Brown, 1994; Fine, 1992; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Stanley, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). These feminist researchers argue that the case-study approach should not be relegated to inferior status to that of *true* experimental research, but rather that the case-study approach has a value, albeit a different one, of its

own: "The testimony of one woman about her life is, in consequence, as compelling and of value as is any empirical study, although it may be of a different sort of value" (Brown, 1994, p. 65).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

All participants were women seeking safety at one of two women's shelters in the central Georgia area. Criteria for inclusion in the study were: (a) identification of the woman by the women's shelter staff as a woman abused by her intimate male partner, (b) participation in at least 8 of the total 16 feminist music therapy sessions, (c) completion of the informed consent form (see Appendix A), and (d) completion of the final interview (see Appendix C) and the final Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS). Of the 35 women participating in the study, 6 met the inclusion criteria and were subsequently included in the data collection portion of the study. For the 29 women unable to complete at least a minimum of 8 sessions of the study and/or the final evaluations, the reasons for prematurely leaving the shelter were varied: their abuser learned of their whereabouts and the women had to relocate for reasons of safety; the women returned to their abuser; the women were requested to leave by the shelter coordinator because of their failure to comply with the shelter rules (e.g., failure to adhere to the shelter's curfew hours, failure to keep the shelter location confidential, etc.). In addition, there were a number of unexpected cancellations of the feminist music therapy sessions at one shelter due to schedule conflicts. The age range of those women completing the study was from 18 to

45 years of age, with two European American participants, one part European American, part Native American participant, and three African American participants. Four were single women, and two were separated. The annual income range for all of the women was less than \$10,000.00. It should be noted that "less than \$10,000" was the lowest category on the form and this was a source of some amusement for the women since most indicated that they had no income at all.

### **Setting**

The research project was conducted at two women's shelters in the central Georgia area, Monday and Wednesday evenings at the one shelter, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the other shelter. For the one shelter, the feminist music therapy group was held in the neighboring music therapy clinic which consists of a living-room type area with comfortable seating arrangements and a full complement of music therapy equipment. At the other shelter, the feminist music therapy group was held in the living room area of the shelter itself, also with comfortable seating arrangements and a full complement of music therapy equipment. At both locations, the women were present and at the same time responsible for the care of their own children. Specifically, each woman, with the exception of two with no children, was responsible for the care of one child.

### **Evaluation Methods**

As discussed previously, empowerment, viewed within a feminist context, is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon which does not render itself easily to

measurement through means of a single method. Furthermore, feminist researchers contend that the full and contextual meaning of women's voices may be better understood through the use of multiple methods (Reinharz, 1992). Subsequently, I chose to evaluate the impact of feminist music therapy by means of triangulation--a research approach which uses multiple methods within a single study.

Triangulation is used by many feminist researchers in a variety of combinations of multiple methods (Reinharz, 1992). It offers the advantage of allowing women and their experiences to be understood in a complex, contextual, and responsive manner. In whatever combination of multiple methods, triangulation enhances understanding through its use of layers of information and its use of one type of evaluation to validate or redefine another. It reflects the multifaceted nature of the lives of both feminist researchers and feminist research participants.

We are multifaceted because we are working during a feminist renaissance that transcends disciplinary boundaries and challenges many of our capacities at once.

Our multifacetedness makes single-method research seem flat and inadequate to explore and express the complexities of women's lives. (Reinharz, 1992, p. 202)

When used to combine quantitative and qualitative measurement, triangulation accommodates the needs of feminist researchers; it allows the use of nontraditional evaluation and methodology while still ensuring scientific rigor. "By combining methods, feminist researchers are particularly able to illuminate previously unexamined and or misunderstood experiences. Multiple methods increase the likelihood of obtaining scientific credibility and research utility" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 197).



In examining the effectiveness of feminist music therapy, I made use of both theoretical and methodological triangulation in order to gain a richer understanding, to accommodate the constraints of field research with abused women, and to safeguard validity and scientific credibility. Theoretical triangulation was used in drawing from three established disciplines--feminist theory, feminist therapy, and music therapy--to develop a unique approach for abused women. It was also used as a framework for developing the final interview questions and for content analysis of the women's interviews and original songs. Through methodological triangulation, I combined quantitative and qualitative measures, making use of one type of measurement to refine and validate the other. The three measures used included a standardized psychological scale, content analysis of the women's songs, and content analysis of the women's interviews.

Because of the complex nature of empowerment, quantitative measurement by means of a standardized psychological scale was limited, in this first exploration of the effectiveness of feminist music therapy, to one particular aspect--self-esteem. This seemed quite appropriate given the focus of feminist music therapy on self-esteem as one of the crucial casualties of women in patriarchy: "Not only our definitions, but our very sense of self have been domesticated, corrupted to patriarchal realities" (Brown, 1994, p. 25). For the purposes of measurement of self-esteem, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) was chosen for the study (Keyser & Sweetland, 1991; Roid & Fitts, 1991). This standardized test was chosen because it was identified as the "most ambitiously and comprehensively conceived scale of self-concept that exists today" (Keyser & Sweetland,

1991, p. 661). As well, the TSCS used a primary norm group which involved an age range from 12 to 68 years of age, equal numbers of women and men, and a variety of educational, social, and economic levels with a "reasonable degree of racial and geographic diversity" (Keyser & Sweetland, 1991, p. 669). Authors of the TSCS reported that samples from other populations did not "differ appreciably from the norms" (Keyser & Sweetland, 1991, p. 669), nor did the effects of such demographic variables as sex, age, race, or education make for appreciable differences. The TSCS is described as a self-administering test of 100 self-descriptive items intended to summarize an individual's self-worth; it is for use with individuals or group, with simple instructions for those as young as 12 years of age or with as little as 5th or 6th grade reading ability. It provides an assessment of self-image with information in three internal aspects (identity, behavior, and self-satisfaction) and five external aspects (e.g., moral-ethical, social, personal, physical, and family). The TSCS has also been found to be "especially useful in generating hypotheses about relatively specific effects of psychotherapeutic regimes and psychosocial interventions" (Keyser & Sweetland, 1991, p. 665). For purposes of scoring the TSCS, the counseling form (Form C) was used. This form uses the same test, but is scored and profiled differently than the counseling and research form (Form C & R). It was selected because it is intended for use with individuals "functioning within the normal range (including situational stress)" and because it does not require an extensive background in psychometrics or psychopathology on the part of the examiner (Roid & Fitts, 1991, p. 15).

Qualitative content analysis of the participants' original songs comprised the second of three measures used in this study's methodological triangulation. Feminist researchers identify the value of analysis of women's personal writings, particularly when it is accomplished within the context of triangulation (Reinharz, 1992).

The third and final measure used in this study involved qualitative content analysis of participants' final interviews. This analysis was important not only in providing another layer of information, but also in adhering to the feminist therapy principle requiring clients' active involvement in all aspects of therapy--including evaluation of their own progress. The final interview, consisting of 15 open-ended questions, was chosen as a measurement which would allow the women's own voices to be heard in all their richness and complexity. Yet abused women's voices are fragile voices. Abused women have intense past experiences of not being heard or believed, of being harmed when speaking out. Subsequently, the issue of validity arises concerning their ability to truly give voice to their experiences if interviewed by a stranger. As a result, in this study I served as both practitioner and interviewer in order to enable the women to speak fully and openly. This was also a practical necessity since the study was conducted in the field, with the possibility of individual women unexpectedly ending the study at any point during a 10-month period. Given the unavoidable necessity of the practitioner and interviewer being one and the same, it became even more essential to rely on triangulation to safeguard validity.

## **Procedures**

Participants, upon being informed of the general nature of the study and upon giving informed consent, met individually with the music therapist to complete the initial interview (see Appendix B) and the TSCS. The women then met as a group for feminist music therapy sessions for a period of 8 weeks (16 sessions). At the end of this time, or immediately prior to their leaving the shelter (whichever came first), the women met individually with the music therapist to complete the final interview and the TSCS. Because a large number of women starting the study left the shelter prematurely (i.e., without staying sufficiently long for the study and/or without having completed the final evaluations), the study continued (as new groups of women joined the shelters) from September 1995 through June 1996.

The women in the study met with the music therapist twice weekly for 90-minute sessions of feminist music therapy. For each session, the first 30 minutes were spent in feminist analysis of power and gender-role socialization by means of lyric analysis; the next 30 minutes were spent in further feminist analysis and in finding their own voices through the feminist music therapy technique of songwriting; the final 30-minute segment was dedicated to exploring self-nurturance through relaxation and music techniques. At times it was not possible for the women to spend the last portion of the session in relaxation because of the demands of their children; in this case, the session was divided equally into feminist lyric analysis (45 minutes) and songwriting (45 minutes).

For purposes of lyric analysis, each woman was provided with a songbook containing lyrics of songs written by a variety of women songwriters, in a variety of

musical styles--rap, alternative, rock, pop, folk, country, R & B, blues, jazz. Native American, and African heritage (see Tables 2 & 3). During each session, participants both chose songs to explore as a result of their own individual preference and were directed by the music therapist to particular songs because of their specific relevance to the issues facing the women. Throughout the study, this feminist lyric analysis addressed the following themes: gender-role socialization (e.g., women's and men's roles, the stereotypes--the actuality and the ideal, love and intimate relationships, child care, etc.), violence (e.g., individual abuse, systemic abuse, the contribution of patriarchy & gender-role socialization, the effects, the recovery process), power (e.g., the lack of power, the need for power, the ways to claim power, etc.), and hope and recovery (e.g., the valuing of women, self-nurturance, self-esteem, etc.).

Title & Artist	Style	Ethnocultural Group
A Priority, Sweet Honey in the Rock	Rap	Black
All I Wanna Do, Sheryl Crow	Alternative	White
All That You Have Is Your Soul, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
America, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
Annie's Blues, Saffire Uppity Blues Women	Blues	Black/White
Ballad of the Welfare Mother, Linda Allen	Pop	White
Behind the Wall, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
Bitch with a Bad Attitude, Saffire Uppity Blues Women	Blues	Black/White
Blackfeet Nation, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
Boys' Club, The Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
Circle, Edie Brickell & the New Bohemians	Alternative	White
Colours, Sweet Honey in the Rock	African	Black
Constant Craving, K. D. Lang	Pop	White
Dreaming on a World, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
Equal/Equally, The Parachute Club	Alternate Rock	White
Exhale (Shoop, Shoop), Whitney Houston	R & B	Black
Even Yuppies Get the Blues, Saffire Uppity Blues Women	Blues	Black/White
First Recollection, The Cowboy Junkies	Pop	White
Floorboard Blues, The Cowboy Junkies	Pop	White
For Herself, Reba McEntire	Country	White
For My Lover, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
Four A.M., Cathy Miller	Pop	White
Free Yourself Up, Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
Get Up Blues, Joyce & Jacque	Pop	Black
Hand in my Pocket, Alanis Morissette	Alternative Rock	White
Higher Ground, Joyce & Jacque	Pop	Black
House of Cards, Mary Chapin Carpenter	Country	White
Hunted, The Cowboy Junkies	Pop	White
I Like 'Em Big & Stupid, Julie Brown	Pop	White
I Will Survive, Chantay Savage	R & B	Black
I'll Love Myself, Joyce & Jacque	Pop	Black
If Women Ruled the World, Joan Armatrading	Pop	Black
In the Bath, Edie Brickell	Alternative	White
Kids' Fears, The Indigo Girls	Alternative	White
The Last Word, Mary Chapin Carpenter	Country	White
Let it Flow, Toni Braxton	Pop	Black
Make It Happen, Mariah Carey	Pop	Black
Me By the Sea, Edie Brickell	Alternative	White
Middle Aged Blues Boogie, Saffire Uppity Blues Women	Blues	Black/White
Mother Earth Speaks, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
Nearest Distant Shore, Trisha Yearwood	Country	White
Not Gon' Cry, Mary J. Blige	R & B	Black
Oakcliff Bra, Edie Brickell	Alternative Rock	White
Outside Myself, K. D. Lang	Pop	White

**Table 2. Songs Used for Feminist Lyric Analysis**

<b>Title &amp; Artist</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Ethnocultural Group</b>
Patterns of the Drum, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
Pissin' on a Skunk, Saffire Uppity Blues Women	Blues	Black/White
Rise Up, The Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
Seven Years, The Cowboy Junkies	Pop	White
She Won't Be Walkin', Four Bitchin' Babes	Pop	Pop
Sexual Intelligence, The Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
Small Victories, The Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
Spirit Keeper, Linda Allen	Pop	White
Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning, The Cowboy Junkies	Pop	White
Superwoman, Karyn White	R & B	Black
Tearing the Veil, The Parachute Club	Alternative Rock	White
This Baby of Mine, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
This Girl I Knew, Jane Siberry	Alternative	White
When A Man Loves A Woman, Jody Watley	R & B	Black
Where Are You?, Wilson-Philips	Pop	White
Why?, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
Why Does It Hurt So Bad?, Whitney Houston	R & B	Black
Woman's Anger, Heather Bishop	Pop	White
Woman's Work, Tracy Chapman	Alternative	Black
You Can Hear Them Dancing, Joanne Shenandoah	Traditional	Native
You Say You Will, Trisha Yearwood	Country	White

**Table 3. Further Songs Used for Feminist Lyrics Analysis**

For purposes of song writing, the women progressed in therapy from songwriting using the Clozé technique, to writing lyrics to previously written melodies, to writing original lyrics and music. While feminist music therapy sessions involved group therapy, individual women worked independently at times within the group to write their own songs with individual support from the music therapist, and with feedback and support from the group as a whole. Upon completion of their songs, each woman had the option to record the song as sung by herself or as sung by the music therapist. Those women who completed the study were given an audiocassette recording of and sheet music for their own songs.

## Results

### Case Study 1

#### Background Information

Ann, a woman of European American & Native American heritage, was 34 years of age at the time of the study.<sup>1</sup> She was separated, with custody of two of her three children--two sons; her husband had custody of the youngest child--a daughter. She had been sexually abused as a child by several family members and, as an adult, had been in three other abusive relationships prior to her current one. She came to the women's shelter in August of 1995 seeking safety after her husband had attacked her and thrown her out of the house. Upon entering the study, Ann completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive score of 293.

In describing her current experience of abuse, Ann indicated that the abuse first started 5 years earlier and was of such a nature that at first she didn't recognize it as abuse. In Ann's own words:

*It started with verbal abuse. Never stopped. Next, throwing things. Then intimidating, physical, then brushing past me [a moment of silence]. I didn't consider that abuse. . . . A lot of the signs that I'm seeing now were there the day I met him and I didn't look at them. I denied them. I ignored them. I was comparing them to out and out blatant abuse, right in your face, boom, bang, you know. With this situation it was very subtle.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>For purposes of confidentiality, all names used in these case studies are fictitious.

<sup>2</sup>In order to hear the women's genuine voices, their words have been set down as they were spoken, with no corrections made, and with all such interjections as "uh" and "um" and moments of silence included.



Ann described the abuse as not at first overtly directed towards her:

*Um, after the situation with all the brushing up against me in the hallway . . . he started breaking and throwing things . . . Broke gifts, jewelry boxes, things I treasured. [And then in a later incidence my husband] told the doctor, he said, "She made me kill John's cat. I said, "You shot Cookie?" I was stunned. The doctor was stunned. He says, "Have you killed animals before?" "Well, it's not the first one I killed for her". And I'm, like, "Oh my God! What is he saying?" This is all news to me. . . I think he could have killed me as easily as he shot the cat [a moment of silence].*

Then later the violence became directed more overtly towards her, gradually escalating in degree and frequency:

*Well he grabbed the alarm clock out of the wall. Ripped it out of the wall. I was sitting on the bed next to him and he came within a fraction of an inch of hitting me right in the face with this alarm clock . . . And I just went numb. I was stunned. And the next incident a couple of days later. Now they're happening weekly. No longer every 3 months or every month, you know. Now it's-- like the day I left him I think I counted like three incidents in the week. And I saw the progression of it. It just blows my mind now even to look back and think about it. To watch the progression. The longer it went on, the closer the incidences that I'm describing now came, you know, boom, boom, boom, boom.*

In describing the last incident before she left, Ann said,

*I was standing in the doorway, which is where he really hated for me to be . . . I had just gotten out of the shower. I'd put on a big old shirt, didn't have anything on underneath it . . . He was kind of like backing me out of the room, I put my hands up like this [she gestures] because he was storming towards me at this point. And I didn't touch him. I mean it happened like this [snaps fingers]. In a second. He grabbed me and chucked me over his shoulder. . . There I was butt*

*naked, legs up in the air, with my 13-year old [son] standing there gawking and my husband, not even turning to look what had happened to me, stormed out the door and went down the hall. That was when I left. That was when I finally left.*

Although Ann's decision to leave was precipitated by physical violence, that was not what she found to be ultimately the most harmful: "It wasn't so much the physical abuse, for that I felt, but a lot of the emotional, the humiliation, the degradation".

### **Therapy**

Ann was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for the full 16 sessions. With the exception of the 2nd and 13th sessions, the time was spent doing feminist lyric analysis, feminist songwriting, and relaxation to music for 30 minutes each. It was not possible to do any relaxation to music during the second session as it was shortened so that all the women, including the music therapist, could participate in a community march against violence; nor was relaxation to music possible in the 13th session because of the presence of Ann's son.

From the beginning, Ann participated enthusiastically in discussions during feminist lyric analysis. She was very articulate and readily drew connections between issues addressed in the songs and her own personal experiences. She found the songs to be so personally meaningful that she requested a recording and a copy of the songbook containing the song lyrics so that she might explore them further on her own in between therapy sessions.

Ann also found songwriting very much in keeping with her skills and interests. Within the first few sessions, she brought in samples of poems she had written earlier, commenting that she had found writing to be very therapeutic. She moved to songwriting with ease, using the opportunity to further explore issues of feminist analysis of power and gender role socialization as they pertained to her own experience.

In her first songwriting experience, Ann was asked to write a song about herself to a previously written melody by choosing two synonyms or roles, three adjectives, and four adjectives ending in "ing". She quickly wrote the song and was so taken with the concept that she returned the following session with two additional verses. How she valued herself as well as her difficulties with self-acceptance can be seen in *Ann's Song*.

#### Ann's Song

This is a song about Ann  
Gypsy, traveler  
Lonely, weary, and pretty  
Caring daring, enchanting, romancing  
Ann

This is a song about Ann  
Crazy, lover  
Naughty, unstable, and happy  
Caring, daring, enchanting, romancing  
Ann

This is a song about Ann  
Christian warrior  
Rebel, heartless, and cold  
Caring, daring, enchanting, romancing  
Ann

In her second song, original lyrics written to the melody of Saffire's *Annie's Blues* (Rabson, 1990). Ann was able to give voice to her resistance. She identifies the abuse-- particularly the emotional abuse--and control experienced in her most recent relationship and her refusal to accept it any longer: "Well you ain't nothing but controlling and I'm gonna cut the ties". In the line, "I'm gonna rock, I'm gonna roll, I'm gonna rise above it all", she recognizes her own strength as a survivor.

## Ann's Blues

Ain't gonna be nobody's puppet, ain't gonna be nobody's fool  
Ain't gonna be nobody's puppet, ain't gonna be nobody's fool  
I'm gonna go where I wanna any damn time I choose

Ain't gonna care about opinions, ain't gonna care about you  
Ain't gonna care about opinions, ain't gonna care about you  
I'm sick and tired of your football and I ain't gonna cook your stew

I'm gonna rock, I'm gonna roll, I'm gonna rise above it all  
I'm sick and tired of it baby 'cause I always take the fall  
Well listen to me brother to what I say to you  
I'll go where I want to and you can go get screwed  
Ain't gonna be nobody's puppet, ain't gonna be nobody's fool  
I'll just go wherever I want to, any damn time I choose

I like to write, I like to sing  
I like to shout, I like to dream  
I like to write, I like to sing  
I like to shout, I like to dream  
And man I'm gonna tell you, you ain't gonna pull my string

You ain't nothing but a heartache, I'm tired of all your lies  
You ain't nothing but a heartache, I'm tired of all your lies  
You ain't nothing but controlling and I believe I'm gonna cut the ties

Ain't gonna be nobody's puppet, ain't gonna be nobody's fool  
Ain't gonna be nobody's puppet, ain't gonna be nobody's fool  
I'm gonna go where I wanna any damn time I choose

In another song, *Dream World*, which was written to the melody of Edie Brickell's  
(1990) *Oak Cliff Bra*, Ann further explores her hopes for a new life:

## Dream World

Sittin' in a dream world without a care in my mind  
Watchin' the sea roll on  
A sea gull and a sunrise are my only friends, I sigh  
Sand upon the beaches like mountains of time within my rhymes  
What's my life become?  
Thought became the patterns as they found a way that kept me here  
Freedom in the seasons wash away with ocean breezes, I sigh  
Now my life begins.

Having developed her confidence in her ability as a songwriter, the next step was the writing of original lyrics and music. Ann chose to use this original song to explore the value of her Native American heritage and the value, despite her current situation, of what she had to offer her son in *A Mother's Gift*. In keeping with the theme she wrote music which consisted of a simple chant reflecting her interest in Native American music.

### A Mother's Gift

Walked in my room the other evening  
A little child of 8 years  
I was sleeping, he was creeping  
Thought I saw his father there

Some may tease and some may taunt you  
But there's a lot that they don't know  
I've always called you my Indian warrior  
You've had to be so brave and strong

They say I'm Indian and don't belong here  
An ugly, stupid alien  
Mama, I don't understand  
Why they like to make me cry

Teach me Mama about my father  
Teach me Mama about this land  
Talk about my Indian heritage  
Tell me Mama, take my hand

Radio's on and now he's dancing  
Walking away towards the door  
Love you Mama, gotta go now  
Thought I felt his father there

We are made from the earthen dust  
Your mother one day calls you home  
Honor the land and the life it gives  
Follow the buffalo where they roam

Remember your grandmother's journey  
As she walked the Trail of Tears  
Don't ever let them call you alien  
The Blackfeet have been here a million  
years

I'm your mother and I love you  
We will sing with the wind  
We have danced to the thunder  
We will laugh in the rain

The songwriting experience, as can be seen in the length of her song, seemed to allow Ann to open the floodgates, letting her creativity flow, giving voice to her experiences.

The flow of creativity can also be seen in the writing of Ann's last song, *Maybe*, which she wrote spontaneously. Because this was unplanned and at the end of the study, I composed the music for Ann's lyrics. In contrast to the serious mood of *A Mother's Gift*, *Maybe* reflects Ann's spirit of playfulness, a spirit which I believe helped Ann greatly as she struggled with the challenges of her life.

## Maybe

I came in through the door after a long and tiring day  
I lay my head down on the table and said I think I'll pray  
Then I laughed and said, "Just kidding",  
but there's something that's just not right here  
I don't have a clue what that something could be  
But there's something that's just not right here

Maybe it's my allergies, Maybe I'm getting a cold  
Maybe it *is* my period, Maybe I'm just getting old  
Maybe I'm going through menopause  
Maybe I need to get laid  
No, it's not that I have to, it's more that I want to  
Yes I want to get laid

I came in through the door after a long and tiring day  
I lay my head down on the table and said I think I'll pray  
Then I laughed and said, "Just kidding",  
but there's something that's just not right here  
I don't have a clue what that something could be  
But there's something that's just not right here

Maybe I'll fix some tea, Maybe I'll take a bath  
Maybe I'll go outside for a while, Maybe I just need a laugh  
Maybe I should pet the cat, Maybe I'll talk to my shrink  
Maybe I should stop asking why, Maybe I'll just sit here and think.

All of Ann's songs were recorded, with Ann singing accompanied by myself. At her last session, Ann was given a copy of the recording and of the sheet music for each of the songs. She acknowledged the power of seeing her own words in print and of hearing her own voice in song recorded.



## **Evaluation**

In evaluating the impact of feminist music therapy in Ann's life, attention shall first be focused on the results of the TSCS. Once that has been accomplished, I shall turn to Ann's description of the experience and its effects in her own words.

The results of Ann's pretest TSCS indicated profile validity and very low self-esteem and self-acceptance, with her Total Positive Score of 293 placing her in the fifth percentile.<sup>3</sup> Her post-test score, with profile validity as well, showed continued low self-esteem, but with some noteworthy changes (see Table 4). While Ann's Social-Self and Moral-Ethical Self scores remained low & stable, she showed some increase in her Total Positive Score (an increase from the 5th percentile to the 8th percentile), in her Identity score (from the 4th to the 8th percentile), in her Self-Satisfaction score (from the 10th to the 34th percentile), and in her Physical-Self score ( from the .09th to the 3rd percentile). Although there was a marked decrease in her Family score (from the 18th to the 1st percentile, with high variability scores), this needs to be interpreted within the context of Ann's life. Roid & Fitts (1991) allow that a low score in a specific area, in combination with high variability scores, could be indicative of a specific problem area in self-esteem. I believe, however, that a closer examination of the TSCS Family-Self items might allow for another interpretation. The items within the Family Self category are ambiguous enough that they may be taken as referring to either the family of origin or the current family, of which the abuser would be a member. This category includes such items as: "I

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<sup>3</sup>The TSCS defines profile validity as a respondent's "candidness, honesty, and test-taking attitude" (Roid & Fitts, 1991, p. 17). This profile validity is determined through an analysis of the respondent's Self-Criticism and Distribution scores.

am a member of a happy family". "I am not loved by my family". and "I am happy with my family relationships". For women in abusive relationships, I believe that a low Family-Self score could simply point to the obvious--that the relationship is abusive. Indeed, a decrease in their Family-Self score might suggest that the respondent is gaining a more realistic view of her relationship--something that is a desired outcome of feminist therapy and feminist music therapy.

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	293	305	33	36	5th	8th
Identity	107	114	32	36	4th	8th
Self-Satisfaction	85	102	37	48	10th	34th
Behavior	101	89	37	28	37th	28th
Physical Self	47	55	18	29	.09th	3rd
Moral-Ethical	73	75	53	56	60th	72nd
Personal	60	55	43	37	25th	10th
Family	63	49	40	25	18th	1st
Social Self	70	71	53	53	60th	60th

**Table 4. Ann's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

As with the results of her TSCS, the results of Ann's final interview reflected both improvement and, at the same time, an on-going struggle with issues of self-esteem. When asked how she would describe herself in terms of power and independence, Ann

replied that, *"Emotionally, I feel really good about my independence and being self-supportive"*. Yet, when asked if she valued herself, she replied that, *"I don't. Really. Much. Value myself. Maybe what I do. Where I've been, Where I'm at and where I'm going. But as a person, I'm, I, I, I don't like being alone with me"*. As far as future intimate relationships were concerned, Ann's comments were: *"Oh, yuck! . . . I don't know. I've been trying to figure that one out. I think that I need to be intimate with Ann"*. For Ann to reject our culture's strong messages to women concerning the importance of being part of a couple and to supplant that with the importance of "being intimate with herself", reflects, I believe, great progress.

Ann spoke of her experience in music therapy and her efforts to recover from the harm of abuse, saying that

*I think I, uh, my perceptions have changed about who I am. Some doors have opened for me . . . And to learn about the way music was written, or the way that patterns and rhythms, to learn that maybe being musical is something you choose to be or have or want to do. Maybe there's more out there than I'm giving myself credit for, you know.*

Ann described the experience of listening to women's songs as

*It was tough! It was like, wow, you mean this stuff is really out there?! People really saying these things and selling it in the stores . . . And I could easily find myself right smack dab in the middle of it, going hog wild with it. And I'm surprised by that. Really surprised.*

Finally, in describing the experience of writing and recording her own songs, Ann commented

*That was fun! It was, it was really fun. It gave me a feeling of self-confidence and ability. You know, just that little something I needed to boost my ego. Kind of like, wow, I can write something! . . . And then it was emotional kind of writing. It wasn't, it wasn't. It was the kind of writing that was, it was an escape, a way out, a therapy. That's what it was. To write something that could be turned into music for other people, or something someone could listen to and enjoy. Or to know that I have the potential. Or the ability's there, or the option is there if I choose to go that route, that kind of thing. That, that was good for me.*

## **Case Study 2**

### **Background Information**

Molly, an African American woman, was 27 years of age at the time of the study. She was single, with no children, and had an annual income of less than \$10,000. She came to the women's shelter in October 1995 seeking safety from her ex-boyfriend who had followed her to the hotel room, where she was staying after leaving him, and threatened to kill her. Upon entering the study, Molly completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive Score of 303.

In describing her experience of abuse, Molly struggled to find the words, often speaking with great understatement. She mentioned in passing that she had a slight fever as a result of an infection. Only afterwards, in response to a question, did she identify the cause of this infection:

*Uh, the reason why I'm here because, um, my boyfriend he be jumping on me all the time . . . And, um, he just, he just abusive to me . . . And so he's jumping me over there. He got, uh, got a broom, a broom, and put it up in me.*

Molly did indicate that she had left her abuser 2 years earlier, but had returned to him for reasons of fear:

*The first time I came here it been 2 years ago. I came here . . . and I didn't accept her [the shelter coordinator's] help. She took me to a shelter, something like that and I didn't accept that. I was scared, I was afraid to leave because, you know, I was scared of him.*

Molly also mentioned that initially she had been reluctant to seek help from the police:

*He always, he want, he be doing stuff to me, but I never told the police about him . . . I done went to my supervisor, I went to my supervisor [a moment of silence] but, you know, I don't want to get him in trouble 'cause he was a corrections officer.*

In summing up the effects of her experience, Molly stated simply: "*But he has really, I done really came down because of him*".

### **Therapy**

Molly was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for 12 sessions. She left the shelter prematurely because her ex-boyfriend learned of her whereabouts and she had to relocate. With the exception of the second session, the time was spent doing feminist lyric analysis, feminist songwriting, and relaxation to music for 30 minutes each. As with Ann, there was insufficient time for relaxation during the second session because all of the group members participated in a community march against violence immediately prior to that session.

Just as she was uncomfortable giving voice to her experience during the initial interview, so too did Molly have trouble giving voice to her feelings during actual therapy sessions. She was enthusiastic about listening to the women's music and enjoyed the relaxation time. She too asked for a copy of the women's songbook and accompanying cassette; as well, she brought in a cassette for me of an African American woman songwriter whom she admired--Mary J. Blige. However, in terms of discussion and songwriting she was reminiscent of some of the women in Belenky's study *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al, 1986). These silent women, as Belenky named them, had gifts of intelligence but were unable to express themselves, to speak out to protest. Such seemed the case for Molly in many ways. She would, at times, express an opinion, but in response to direct questions only and in short statements without further elaborations. She was successful, with support, in the songwriting, but struggled initially to find her voice, particularly as she saw Ann (who was a fellow group member) writing with such apparent ease. This was reflected directly in the nature of her finished songs.

Molly's first song, written with the Clozé technique, took great effort and time on Molly's part, and some support both from myself and the other group members. Yet, when finished, the lyrics were positive, graceful, and pleasing to Molly when she heard them sung.

### Reflections on Molly

This is a song about Molly  
Survivor, still water  
Quiet, strong, and bright  
Caring, bewaring, winging, sweet-singing  
Molly

Similarly, Molly's second song, a song written to the melody of *Annie's Blues* (Rabson, 1990), was finished only after considerable effort. Unlike, Ann, who easily wrote five verses, Molly finished with one verse. Within that one verse, however, Molly was able to give voice to her resistance.

### Molly's Blues

Don't wanna be nobody's victim  
Don't wanna be black and blue  
Don't wanna be nobody's victim  
Don't wanna be black and blue  
I'm packing up my bags 'cause baby we're through

In her last feminist music therapy session before leaving the shelter, Molly brought me a news clipping from the local paper concerning herself. It read:

A 35-year-old man was arrested Tuesday after a 27-year-old woman said he tried to pull her into a car in the 100 block of Simmons Lane earlier that morning. When she wouldn't get in the car, the woman said the man--her ex-boyfriend--grabbed her purse and punched her in the face. Deputies noticed her left eye was swollen and bruised. (Crime Digest, 1995, p. A3)

A very animated conversation ensued, with Molly very eloquently expressing her anger--anger against a man who failed to behave anything like a boyfriend, anger at the legal system which failed to help, and anger at the reporter who failed to write with compassion. As we talked, we agreed that this might be an excellent theme for her next

song. I jotted down her ideas so that we could work on them in the next session, with neither of us aware that this was to be her last session. When I learned that she had had to relocate, I used her words and her emotions to compose a song for her. I was later able to visit and give her song sheets and recordings of this song, *To Be Free*, and of the other songs she had previously written and recorded.

#### To Be Free

The words in the paper were plain and simple no apparent emotions attached  
The headline stated starkly Crime Digest, December 1st, 1995.  
Underneath, laid out in neat little columns countless stories of other people's lives  
But one woman's story, not so much different from the rest caught my eye

#### Chorus:

All I ask is that you hear my voice  
And listen to my story  
Like all other women seeking safety  
We want to be free

It said a man was arrested Tuesday  
A woman said he tried to pull her in his car  
She said they struggled, she resisted  
He grabbed her purse and punched her in the eye  
The facts were told so cold, the names we must withhold  
To protect the innocent  
It simply mentioned his relationship--her ex-boyfriend--in a brief aside

She said he punched her in the face  
They said they noticed her eye was swollen and bruised  
The facts were told as given, nothing inferred, no judgments made  
Why does this story haunt me so, why does it stay with me night and day?  
Why do I feel there's so much more to be read between the lines  
I'll tell you my secret, I've told others, 'though none have heard  
That woman was me  
Repeat Chorus

The papers tell our stories in terms of love  
I wonder is it love gone wrong or simply hate  
Some people look at me, they shake their heads  
With words no different than what he said  
The words trap my heart like clipped wings do a bird  
More harmful than any blow  
Some say, "Stand by your man". others ask, "Why don't you leave him?"  
I ask, "Why won't he let me go"  
Repeat Chorus



## Evaluation

The results of Molly's pretest TSCS indicated profile validity and very low self-esteem and self-acceptance, with her Total Positive Score of 303 placing her in the eighth percentile. Her post-test scores, with profile validity as well, indicated a marked increase in her overall self-esteem as well as in most of the individual categories (see Table 5). Her Total Positive Score increased from the 8th to the 50th percentile; Her Identity, Behavior, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, and Personal Self scores also increased (from 8th to 72nd, from 16th to 88th, from below the .09th to 50th, from 18th to 50th, and from 7th to 48th percentile respectively). Her Family score remained stable at a high level, while her Social and Self-Satisfaction scores decreased (from 40th to 30th, and from 18th to 7th percentile respectively). Despite these few areas of decrease, her overall self-esteem did

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	303	348	36	50	8th	50th
Identity	113	137	36	60	8th	82nd
Self-Satisfaction	87	83	39	35	18th	7th
Behavior	103	128	38	62	16th	88th
Physical Self	47	72	18	50	.09th	50th
Moral-Ethical	63	70	39	50	18th	50th
Personal	54	64	35	48	7th	48th
Family	74	75	54	55	68th	70th
Social Self	65	64	47	45	40th	30th

**Table 5. Molly's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

improve considerably.

In her final interview, Molly expressed this increased confidence in herself but, as before, the words did not come easily and most were in response to very direct and specific questions. When asked how she would describe herself in terms of power and independence, Molly stated simply, "*Very independent*". [Interview Question: How about power?] *Yes I think I'm powerful too*". Similarly, when asked to describe herself in general terms, Molly replied, "*I am very important*". Concerning future intimate relationships, Molly commented: "*Don't want one*". She described her efforts at recovering from the harm of her previous relationship simply as, "*It was hard*".

Molly described her experience in music therapy with similar brevity: "*I liked that. I like, I like, I enjoyed it*". [Interview Question: Were there any particular parts of it you liked better than others?] *The relaxation. I miss that. I really miss that.*" Again, in response to a question about the meaning for her of listening to other women's songs, she replied simply, "*I enjoyed that too*". Then when further asked if there were anything that surprised her about herself or about the music, she commented, "*Trying to write music!*" [Interview Question: Trying to write music. Was it harder than you thought? Easier?] *Easier than I thought.*"

### **Case Study 3**

#### **Background Information**

Jane, a European American woman, was 18 years of age at the time of the study. She was single with no children, although she was pregnant. She had an annual income of

less than \$10,000. She came to the women's shelter because she had no place to live after having had her boyfriend arrested for abusing her. Upon entering the study, Jane completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive score of 321.

In describing her experience of abuse, Jane indicated that it had started a year earlier, but that it was not until the violence got much worse that she decided to have her abuser--a boyfriend 14 years her senior--arrested.

*He used to hit me all the time but it was nothing like that I couldn't handle. Like busted lips or something like that . . . But I think I almost waited a little too late 'cause his intentions was to kill me.*

Jane indicated that the abuse involved all types of abuse, with the exception of sexual abuse. Yet for her, the most difficult part of the relationship was starting on drugs with her abuser:

*When I first met him I didn't know, you know, I never messed with drugs or nothing like that . . . But after he, I finally realized, well, I can't, by me not being on drugs, I can't change him. It just lessens our time together. So I decided I'd try it out. So I tried and unfortunately I got hooked but I got my own self off. And so, um, that was probably the worst part, me being down on his level.*

In summing up her experience, Jane commented,

*I have went through some bad, bad, bad, terrible stuff no 18 year old . . . And as long as you keep trying and don't quit, and do what you know is right, then things will eventually get better and this is my, this is my, whatever you want to call it, my big break.*

## Therapy

Jane was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for 10 sessions. She left the shelter before the end of the study in order to go to a home for expectant teenagers, a move she was eager to make in hopes of meeting other women of more similar age and situation. The time in feminist music therapy was spent doing feminist lyric analysis for the first 45 minutes and feminist songwriting for the other 45 minutes. With this group of women, it was not possible to spend time doing relaxation to music since all but Jane had their own young toddlers and infants to supervise.

From the beginning, Jane participated enthusiastically, readily expressing her opinions in discussions during feminist lyric analysis. Initially, she spoke firmly of the ease with which she left her abuser and her complete lack of any further feelings for him. It was only later, in listening to *Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning* (Timmins, 1990) by the Cowboy Junkies that Jane was able to express some of her mixed feelings and her ongoing struggle. The opportunity to hear other women songwriters truly allowed Jane to give voice to her genuine feelings and the deeper meaning of her experiences in a way not otherwise possible.

This was true also of the songwriting, in which Jane's later attempts delved into issues in greater depth. Jane approached the songwriting initially much as she might approach a homework assignment. She wanted to know what was required of her, then set about the task, and promptly *'handed it in'* to me. These first attempts generally reflected more on her physical situation and feelings. Later, as her confidence grew and as she

responded to the supportive environment of the group, her songs became more reflective, looking further inward.

Jane's first song took some effort on her part and then was completed with a single verse. Because of the use of the Clozé technique, the song's theme was, of necessity, about herself.

#### Jane's Song

This is a song about Jane  
Strong and color-blind  
Open-minded, talkative, and caring  
Loving, trusting, standing, and feeling  
Jane

The performance of this song and all of the other group members' songs was met with much delight by all.

Jane's second song, written to the melody of *Annie's Blues* (Rabson, 1990), reflects both her focus on physical feelings and her bouts of morning sickness.

#### Jane's Blues

Don't wanna be so got damn queasy  
Don't wanna be so damn sick  
Don't wanna be so got damn queasy  
Don't wanna be so damn sick  
I just wanna have this baby, get it over with right now

Don't wanna be so tired and weary  
Don't wanna be so sleepy and weak  
Don't wanna be so tired and weary  
Don't wanna be so sleepy and weak  
I just wanna crawl into my bed and be left the hell alone!

Jane's final song reflects her progress as she moved away from writing for me to writing for herself, giving voice to her deeper, truer self. Although she wrote only the lyrics (she did not stay at the shelter long enough to complete her own song with original music), she was pleased with the way she was able to tell her story through song. In these lyrics can be found a strong and positive message of resistance.

### **Moving**

I'm sleepy but wide awake	I'm scared but I'm brave
I'm homeless but sheltered	I'm mean but I'm nice
I'm battered but I'm alive, yeah	I can't concentrate but I'll try
I'm pregnant but skinny	I'm here but I'm over there
I'm strong but I'm weak	I'm happy but crying
I'm rich but I'm poor, yeah	I'm laughing but it ain't funny
But what it all comes down to	What it all boils down to my friend
Is that nothing ever stays the same	Is that this and that aren't really the same
I've got one foot on the ground	I've got two feet on the ground
And the other one's aimed at your butt	And both of them are moving

I'm young but I'm restless  
I'm right but I'm wrong  
I apologize but I'm not sorry  
I'm high but on life  
I'm battered but I'm alive  
I'm weak but I'm strong, yeah  
What it all comes down to  
Is that some things might stay the same  
I've got one foot on the ground  
And the other one's one step ahead

### **Evaluation**

The results of Jane's pretest TSCS indicated profile validity and self-esteem within the normal range but on the low end, with her Total Positive score of 321 placing her within the 23rd percentile. Her post-test scores, with profile validity as well, showed a

marked increase in her overall self-esteem, as well as in almost all of the individual categories (see Table 6). Her Total Positive score increased from the 23rd to the 40th percentile, placing it well within the normal range. All of her scores in the individual categories also increased with the exception of her Family score which decreased from the 3rd to less than first percentile. As discussed previously, such a decrease for an abused woman could be seen as a successful outcome of feminist music therapy. The largest increases in the individual categories were found in her Identity, Self-Satisfaction, Physical Self, and Personal Self scores (from the 18th to 49th percentile, from the 55th to the 75th percentile, from the 50th to the 72nd percentile, and from the 48th to the 90th percentile respectively).

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	321	340	42	47	23rd	40th
Identity	118	126	40	49	18th	48th
Self-Satisfaction	107	115	52	57	55th	75th
Behavior	96	99	34	35	6th	7th
Physical Self	72	77	50	56	50th	72nd
Moral-Ethical	60	67	36	45	8th	30th
Personal	64	74	49	63	48th	90th
Family	54	49	30	25	3rd	.8th
Social Self	71	73	53	56	60th	72nd

**Table 6. Jane's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

In her final interview, Jane expressed this increased self-esteem freely and in no uncertain terms. When asked how she would describe herself in terms of power or independence, Jane responded, "*Eventually when I get out of here I will be independent and very powerful*". In response to the question, "Who are you?", Jane replied:

*Uh, I'm strong-minded. It might don't seem like it but I am. Strong minded. I'm smart. Um, Um, I'm fun to be around. I'm independent. Will be independent. Uh, and I'm hard working. And whenever I say I'm going to do something that means I'm going to do it. And I have my own beliefs.*

In discussing the issue of valuing self, Jane commented, "*Oh, oh that's important. If you, if you, me, valuing myself, that makes me want to reach for the higher goals, that makes me want to go that one extra step further*".

Jane described her experiences in feminist music therapy in saying,

*Oh, I like 'em. Like, I think, I think having a different person who's not here all week coming in for an hour and a half, that makes the day a little bit, that makes the day a lot better for me. And then listening to music and then just sitting down and relaxing and, and just laughing. I like that.*

When asked what she learned, if anything, about herself in music, Jane replied, "*That a lot, a lot of women songwriters, what they wrote, I could have wrote 'em myself 'cause it explains me*". In concluding her interview, Jane described her experience of writing her own songs as,

*Interesting. Only because I, I was willing to do it with an open mind. But it was interesting. It was something new and I liked it. I didn't get a lot written, but I liked it. [Interview comment: No, unfortunately you're leaving early. Your last song was great]. Yeah, I'm proud of that one!*



## Case Study 4

### Background Information

Nancy, an African American woman, was 32 years of age at the time of the study. She was single with a 4-month old daughter, and had an annual income of less than \$10,000. She came to the women's shelter in April 1996 seeking safety from her boyfriend who had abused her. Upon entering the study, Nancy completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive score of 386.

In describing her experience of abuse, Nancy was very circumspect. What little she said was generally understated, with no reference to the impact on her, and generally given only in response to direct questions.

Q: Tell me about your experience of abuse.

A: *Well, okay, like April the first we got into a little argument and then I continued to stay and he continued to fuss and fuss until it lead into a big fight and so on the fifth or sixth day I just decided to get and leave.*

Q: Was there violence?

A: *Yeah, that's why I left.*

Q: And was that the first instance of violence?

A: *Yeah. You could really say, yeah.*

Q: Is there anything else you can tell me. Anything you would want others to know about your situation?

A: *[Shakes head no]*

This manner of describing herself and her situation was also seen in her pretest TSCS. Although Nancy's results indicated a high Total Positive score, they failed to indicate profile validity. Her extremely high Distribution score, in conjunction with her very high Total Positive score, indicated that she had a pattern of choosing an unusually large number of "1" (Completely False) or "5" (Completely True) responses. This, in conjunction with her initial interview, suggested the possibility that Nancy was not comfortable describing herself or her situation in anything less than extremely positive terms.

### **Therapy**

Nancy was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for 10 sessions. The time in feminist music therapy was spent doing feminist lyric analysis for the first 45 minutes and feminist songwriting for the other 45 minutes. As with previous groups of women, it was not possible to spend time doing relaxation to music since Nancy had her 4-month old daughter to attend to and since several of the other women had their own young infants and toddlers to supervise.

Nancy participated in the discussions during feminist lyric analysis, although initially her comments were limited to the superficial, with little or no reference to her own personal experiences. She would make statements to the effect that she could not understand any woman who stayed in an abusive situation, that she had simply left at the first instance of violence, and that it did not pay to dwell on the past. Only later was she able, to a certain extent, to acknowledge the challenges facing abused women and the impact of her own personal experiences.

In feminist songwriting, Nancy's approach was at first tentative: she expressed concerns that she would not be able to come up with the right words. Soon afterwards, however, she surprised herself with the amount she had to say and the ease with which she wrote it.

Her first song, written with the Clozé technique, took effort and support but the end result pleased Nancy immensely. Indeed, all the women in the group responded with much surprise, good-humored laughter, and genuine pleasure when they heard each other's songs sung.

#### Nancy's Song

This is a song about Nancy  
African American and mother of one  
Sexy, outrageous, and outgoing  
Swinging, occupying, outstanding, and becoming  
Nancy

With her second song, *Nancy's Blues*--written to the melody of *Annie's Blues* (Rabson, 1990), Nancy showed the beginning signs of freeing herself up. Although some of the lyrics were very similar to the original lyrics, others were genuine expressions of her own feelings and experiences. Although some were positive, some also reflected a growing ability to explore the more difficult parts of her previous relationship.

## Nancy's Blues

Don't wanna be nobody's girlfriend, don't wanna be nobody's fool  
Don't wanna be nobody's girlfriend, don't wanna be nobody's fool  
I just wanna be a stronger woman  
Ain't that cool

I wanna play around, don't wanna stay around  
I need some money, don't need some honey  
Don't wanna be nobody's girlfriend, don't wanna be nobody's fool  
I just wanna be a stronger woman  
Ain't that cool

Love is sweet, love is sour  
Love is like a clock striking each hour  
Don't wanna be nobody's girlfriend, don't wanna be nobody's fool  
I just wanna be a stronger woman  
Ain't that cool

Love is kind, love is blind  
Love is strong, love is weak  
Don't wanna be nobody's girlfriend, don't wanna be nobody's fool  
I just wanna be a stronger woman  
Ain't that cool

Nancy's growing ease at expressing her true and genuine voice was reflected in her third song, *Head Held High*. Written as it was to the melody of *Hand in My Pocket* (Morissette, 1995), Nancy was given much less structure and much less specific directions for her lyric writing, yet she completed the song with ease. By this time, her enthusiasm for and self-confidence in lyric writing could be seen in that she took it upon herself to write a second verse on her own in between therapy sessions.

### Head Held High

I'm falling, but standing  
I'm down, but I'm glad with a big smile  
I'm Black but I'm proud  
I can say it out loud  
I've got my head up high, baby  
What it all comes down to is I haven't got a chance to digest it just yet  
I've got my hands down by my side and my head held up high

I was lost but I'm found now  
I was sad but I'm happy now  
I was crawling but now I am walking  
What it all comes down to is no one has really digested it just yet  
I've got my hands down by my side and my feet ready for walking  
What it all comes down to is that I don't need to digest it all yet  
I've got my head held up high, a blessing from Jesus to me

For her final song, Nancy wrote both original lyrics and music. In this song, *Sacrifices*, can be seen Nancy's willingness and ability to explore her own experiences at a deeper level (and at greater length--the completed song had 12 verses). Some of the lyrics, particularly those at the beginning of the song, have some similarity with those of other songs we had studied. I believe this reflects Nancy's ability to see herself and her experience in those songs and the permission they gave her to give voice to all of her own experiences--not only the positive ones. Most of the lyrics, particularly those in the latter half of the song, are entirely original, reflecting no similarity with those of other songs. I believe this reflects Nancy's experience of finding her own genuine voice and of developing the self-confidence to accept it and express it. The change in Nancy is also reflected in the change in her lyrics from the beginning lines, "He will change some day", to the final verse, "I've changed today, I've found my way, I'm home".

## Sacrifices

Let's have an ear of experience  
Let's listen to that voice  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

How he used to love me  
So I can leave  
But where do I go?  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

Often I find hope and the courage  
Truth and simplicity  
I'm dying inside to exist  
For the right to have my own  
I know I'll find the strength deep inside  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

Two whole years of sacrifices  
And all I have is a baby to show  
But I love her, love to watch her grow

Another sleepless night  
No good to call the police  
Just another domestic here  
They won't bother to interfere  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

I thought I could make something  
That could be mine forever  
Amy was the best I could do  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

All I have is my faith and soul  
Awaiting for a better day  
And a second chance and a little luck  
Would come my way  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

The years I've travelled so far away from  
home  
My dream didn't come with me  
And I felt left alone  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

Just before dawn a dream awakened me  
In a place I now know I would be  
Sometimes not having faith  
Darkness would take me from my health  
I'd reach out for my higher power  
And reach out to myself  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

I've found my way back home  
He was blinded by obstacles, voices and  
vision  
He needed to hear and see  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

I've listened to that voice  
I've seen the vision  
I've realized  
He needs it more than he needs me  
He will change someday  
He will change someday

I knew I'd find my home  
I lost my vision and went down the wrong  
road  
Thinking of bad things only  
Instead I have now found my own vision to  
see  
What's up ahead

I've changed today  
I've found my way  
I'm home

For Nancy, the finding and valuing of her own true voice is no more powerfully illustrated than in the process of recording *Sacrifices*. Initially, Nancy had asked that I perform it and record it for her. By the following session, however, she had decided, to my delight, that she would like to perform it herself for the final recording. The actual recording process itself further strengthened her confidence in her own true voice. With the recording equipment set up and microphone in hand, Nancy first had to take a moment to steady herself, for she said her hands were trembling and her heart racing with nervousness. However, after several rehearsals of the song, her confidence grew visibly and she successfully completed a recording of her own song in her own voice.

### **Evaluation**

The results of Nancy's pretest TSCS indicated a very high self-esteem, with a Total Positive score of 386 placing her in the 91st percentile. However, as mentioned previously, there was no profile validity. Her extremely high Distribution score (in the 99th percentile), taken in conjunction with her initial interview, suggested the possibility that Nancy was not comfortable describing herself or her situation in anything less than extremely positive terms. While Nancy's post-test TSCS showed a decrease in self-esteem (from the 91st to the 65th percentile), these results, unlike those of the pretest, indicated profile validity. In other words, her post-test results reflected a more candid and accurate measurement of her self-esteem. With a Total Positive post-test score of 361, her self-esteem was placed solidly within the normal range (see Table 7). Because the pretest TSCS lacked profile validity, there is little opportunity to compare, by means of the

TSCS, her self-esteem at the completion of the study with that at the beginning of the study.

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	386	361	64	54	91st	65th
Identity	135	133	58	55	77th	70th
Self-Satisfaction	127	114	66	56	95th	74th
Behavior	124	114	58	48	77th	45th
Physical Self	84	71	67	48	96th	45th
Moral-Ethical	74	75	55	55	70th	70th
Personal	82	79	75	69	99th	97th
Family	74	66	53	44	60th	28th
Social Self	72	70	55	52	70th	58th

**Table 7. Nancy's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

In her final interview, Nancy's responses were in greater length and depth than those of her initial interview. As with the post-test TSCS, her final interview presents a more candid and accurate reflection of her feelings. As did her songs, this final interview also reflected Nancy's increased self-esteem.

When asked to describe herself, Nancy replied, *"I'm neat, understanding, independent, powerful, curious [laughter]. And basically just an on-going person--get along with everybody, you know. Not hard to get along with"*. She described women in our culture as *"the younger generation, like my age and, like, from 25 and up is not*



*valued. Well at least they don't think so because of the domestic that's going on so much".*  
Yet when asked if she valued herself, she responded, *"Yeah., I always look in the mirror and value myself!"*.

In terms of the music therapy experience, Nancy described it as

*It was great. I had a good time. And now I know how to write a song [laughter].  
Something I never knew how to do or never thought I could do and I kept saying I  
couldn't do it. But much as effort as I put into saying that I couldn't do it, I put  
just as much effort saying I can do it. And that's what happened.*

In discussing what she had learned about herself in music therapy, Nancy commented,

*Well, I've learned that I, that I, what's the word?--creative. That I'm real creative.  
I did learn that. Which I didn't know. But being as I had the music therapy, now I  
know that I'm creative. Just about anything I wanna do, that I put my mind to it, I  
can do it.*

When asked about the experience of listening to other women's songs, Nancy replied,

*"Um, just seeing, like. When I hear it, like, it lets me know that I'm not the only one. And  
that, you know, there's more troubled than just me".* Finally, in describing the experience  
of writing and recording her own songs, Nancy stated, *"I mean it made me feel good!  
[laughter] Real good. So good, I wanna do it again"*. Indeed, Nancy had already  
indicated that she plans to write a gospel song and a rap song next.

## **Case Study 5**

### **Background Information**

Julie, an African American woman, was 25 years of age at the time of the study.  
She was single, with a 6-month old daughter, and had an annual income of less than

\$10,000. She came to the women's shelter in April 1996 seeking safety from her abusive boyfriend. Upon entering the study, Julie completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive score of 355.

In describing her experience of abuse, Julie indicated that the abuse had started in the first year of her 4-year relationship, escalating as time passed, becoming particularly bad at the time she became pregnant. She mentioned that the abuse included all types, with control being an important part of it all:

*He would come home and he would bad mouth me, call me fat, um, broke, sorry, more bitches, stupid, bitch this, bitch that, and other words, you know, I'd rather not say . . . But, you know, he controlled me so much, to the point where I was really scared to leave. He would threaten me, tell me that he would kill me if I left him. And I really thought he would, so I wouldn't.*

She described a pattern in which he would isolate her, control what she wore and did, abuse her, and then abandon her and the baby for periods of time without any money or means of transportation.

*. . . [I said to him] you didn't give me any money. I don't have any clothes or anything . . . I'm wrapping my daughter in baby blankets and Winn Dixie bags and Publix bags and every other bags just to keep her from being, 'cause I didn't want to come up here and say I didn't have any money and he was doing me the way he was.*

Julie indicated that ultimately she left for her daughter's sake:

*I just left everything. Just the little piece of whatever I had and that was it. And I left him 'cause I can't go back in that situation again 'cause I know it, it's mentally, physically, emotionally abusive. And I don't want, I don't want her [she points to her daughter] to grow up in that environment.*

## Therapy

Julie was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for 10 sessions. The time in feminist music therapy was spent doing feminist lyric analysis for the first 45 minutes and feminist songwriting for the other 45 minutes. Being in the same group as Nancy, Julie was not able to do any relaxation to music because of the demands in that group of the infants on their mothers.

Julie was very articulate and participated enthusiastically in the discussions during feminist lyric analysis. She readily drew connections between issues addressed in other women's songs and her own experience. She also suggested some song titles--R & B--which she thought would be good for the group to listen to and discuss. These songs by Jody Watley, Mary J. Blige, and Chantay Savage, as well as songs from the sound track to *Exhale* were particularly effective for Julie and the other women of this group.

In feminist songwriting, Julie was much more hesitant initially. Her first song, written with the Clozé technique, was a genuine struggle for her. She had some difficulty finding words to describe herself as the song required. She did eventually succeed and, when she heard her words about herself put to music, was delighted.

### Julie's Song

This is a song about Julie  
I am woman and I am strong  
Intelligent, sexy, and sweet  
Loving, running, knowing, cunning  
Julie

Julie's second song, *Julie's Blues*, reflects the lesson learned by many women of self-sacrifice. Yet the second verse goes on to acknowledge the harm to her of the abuse and to voice her resistance to further abuse.

#### Julie's Blues

I have someone else to care for  
And her name is Susan Divine  
I have someone else to care for  
And her name is Susan Divine  
If you can't bring home no bacon, then you're just wasting my time

Don't wanna hear no mo' of your lies  
Don't wanna feel no mo' pain  
Don't wanna hear no mo' of your lies  
Don't wanna feel no mo' pain  
Just want you to stay away, all this fighting's only for your gain

Julie's progress in recovering from the abuse is reflected in her third song, *New Road*. It sings of hope and of resistance: "What it all comes down to is the road's not so rough anymore. I got one hand in my pocket and the other's shooting the bird."

## New Road

I'm bitter but I'm sweet  
I'm hard but I'm sensitive  
I'm tired but I'm strong, yeah  
I'm pissed but I'm mellow  
I'm crazy but normal  
You're bold, but I'm bolder, baby  
And what it all comes down to is I've finally got peace of mind  
I've got one hand in my pocket and the other's thanking you Lord

I feel stressed but I'm okay  
I'm tired and frustrated  
I'm calm but I'm restless, yeah  
I'm hurt but contented  
I'm down but I'm hopeful  
I'm hurt but not crying, baby  
What it all comes down to is the road's not so rough anymore  
I got one hand in my pocket and the other's shooting a bird

Julie's final song--her first with original lyrics and music--clearly illustrates the changes in her thinking about women's and men's relationships in general, and about her own relationship in particular. *Not Anymore* provides a strong message of resistance and of self-valuing.

## Not Anymore

There comes a time in a woman's life when she doesn't want to be alone  
She wants that peace of mind, the need to be touched  
by a strong man with strong hands, the kind that turns her on  
But not anymore

There comes a time in a woman's life when she feels like time is running out  
She needs stability, a husband, and a family  
But not anymore

I thought I found that man of my dreams  
But roses turned blue and milk got sour, the grass wasn't green  
Not anymore

Who do you think you're calling a bitch?  
I was good to you from day one, and never stopped  
I should have recognized the signs, but I was blinded by love, you see  
But guess what baby  
Not anymore

You see I realized the day I left you  
That roses are red, only violets are blue  
So you can kiss my ass and the baby's too

I don't have to take your shit  
I am Black, I am beautiful, I am strong, I am proud  
And we don't need you  
No, not anymore

Julie chose to do this song in the style of Jody Watley's (1996) *When a Man Loves a Woman*--spoken with background music. Julie also chose to perform it herself for the final recording. Indeed, it was Julie's positive experience in recording her own song which later helped Nancy to decide to record her song. As with Nancy, the experience of recording her song herself was very self-affirming for Julie.

## Evaluation

The results of Julie's pretest TSCS indicated profile validity and self-esteem within the normal range, with a Total Positive score of 355 placing her in the 60th percentile. Her post-test TSCS scores, with profile validity as well, placed her self-esteem in the normal range again, but at a higher level (see Table 8). Her Total Positive score increased from the 60th to the 80th percentile. All scores, with the exception of the Family score, were within the normal range. All her scores in the individual categories also showed an increase, with the exception of her Moral-Ethical and Personal scores, both of which remained high and stable at the 85th and the 95th percentile respectively.

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	355	375	53	59	60th	80th
Identity	122	128	44	51	28th	53rd
Self-Satisfaction	115	121	57	62	75th	88th
Behavior	118	126	52	60	58th	82n
Physical Self	68	78	44	59	28th	80th
Moral-Ethical	80	80	61	61	85th	85th
Personal	76	76	66	66	95th	95th
Family	57	65	33	43	5th	26th
Social Self	74	76	58	60	78th	82nd

**Table 8. Julie's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

This improved self-esteem was also seen during the course of Julie's final interview. When asked if she felt independent or powerful, Julie replied,

*Oh, oh yeah! I feel a lot better now being away from him and, you know, there, there's, the only person I have to control is myself. You know, I don't have to pretty much, you know, bow down to anybody. You know, I don't have to try and please anybody but myself and my daughter. I feel a lot better. [Interview Question: Would you describe yourself as powerful?] Yeah, yeah! [a smile of self-satisfaction, then laughter as she points to her smile] I can smile again. Yeah, yeah, I can!*

In response to a request to describe herself, Julie commented,

*Um, well, I'll say what I feel like I am now. Now I feel like I'm strong. I'm beautiful, um, intelligent, um, educated. [Interview Question: You said now. Does that reflect a change?] Yes because before I felt like I had to put on make up to look good . . . I, I'm no longer being called dummy or dingy or anything like that. When I know I'm a smart person. Very intelligent. I love to read, you know. I feel like I'm on my level. I don't feel like now I have to stoop down to anybody's level or try to be anybody but myself.*

When asked about her efforts to recover from the harm of abuse, Julie replied,

*You were one of them. Yeah. Because I love music and it helps for me to get it out because [in a whisper] I never talked to anybody about my problems . . . So I kept everything inside and it was killing me. . . Just being here, talking to the girls, talking with you . . . It really helped me out. It really did 'cause I got all that crap out, you know. I was all cried out but I needed to talk about it.*

Julie described her experience in music therapy further in saying:

*Um, it was fun. It was, uh, more emotional therapy, you know, because some part was putting your feelings into music. And, you know, I'm a music lover. So that*



*was the real fun part about it. You know, but then there was the, the. It was just, it was the way I expressed myself that made it good. And that really helped me out emotionally. Made me sit down every Monday and every Wednesday and just think a little more. You know, and hum and [she starts clapping as she sings] "I don't have to take this shit". You know, you know [laughter].*

For Julie, listening to other women's songs was meaningful because: ". . . *some of their problems are [laughter] the same as mine*". She described the experience of writing and recording her own songs, saying, "*That was fun too. Because, um, it was like being in a studio. Yeah a studio*".

In summarizing what she would take with her from her experiences in music therapy, Julie commented,

*I won't leave here and get involved with a man and go through the same changes I been through before. It will never happen again. And I know a lot of women say that and don't follow up behind it. But I think even if I didn't have a child to live for . . . It's not just because of her, but it's because of me. So, I don't want to go through that anymore, you know, so. I meant "No, Not Anymore".*

## **Case Study 6**

### **Background Information**

Amy, a European American woman, was 45 years of age at the time of the study. She was single, with grown children no longer living at home. She had an annual income of less than \$10,000. Amy came to the shelter in April 1996 seeking safety from an abusive boyfriend. Upon entering the study, she completed the initial interview and the TSCS, for which she received a pretest Total Positive score of 304.

In describing her experiences of abuse, Amy indicated that her last two relationships had been abusive. The first was a relationship of 3 years:

*I hooked up with the most wonderful man. I was with him for 2½ weeks before he beat me the first time. And he cried and I loved him so much and he loved me so much, I went back and forth to him. He put me in the hospital. Three and a half times to the emergency room in the 3 year period that I stayed with him. This past October I left and went to a shelter.*

While Amy was staying at a Salvation Army shelter--there had been no available room at any of the women's shelters--she met a man who offered her emotional support: "*And this to me was such good guidance that I hooked up with him and he was with me for a week and 2 days before he beat me up*". She stayed with this man 6 months before coming to the women's shelter. Amy described the abuse in her most recent relationship as involving both physical and emotional abuse:

*It was 2 weeks ago he took me with a rope . . . I was asleep . . . I woke up with a noose around my neck. And he was hollering, "Say you want to live". 'Cause I'm suicidal. And he said, "If you want to die, I'll kill you". And what's sad is I never did ask him to stop. And the scars were all the way around the front . . . because he had me convinced I was just an idiot, just totally stupid. And wanted me alienated from my family and friends.*

In discussing her decision to leave her boyfriend and to come to the women's shelter, Amy commented:

*It's got to the point where I know now I would have been beat up again . . . He knew it was coming. And I said, "No more. I'm through" . . . And then he wanted me to come back home. You know, I'm tired of running. I'm tired of dodging when somebody reaches up to scratch their head . . . Um, I'm terrified.*

## Therapy

Amy was involved in feminist music therapy twice weekly for eight sessions. Being in the same group as Nancy and Julie, Amy's time in feminist music therapy was spent doing feminist lyric analysis for the first 45 minutes and feminist songwriting for the final 45 minutes.

Although she was somewhat quieter than the other women in the group (particularly in the earlier sessions), Amy listened attentively and then later participated eagerly in the discussions during feminist lyric analysis. For Amy, it seemed that hearing women songwriters sing about abuse and hearing the other women in the music therapy group discuss their experiences helped break the isolation and gave her permission to discuss her experiences. Initially she expressed her feelings of fear and of shame. When faced with a song which had women's righteous anger as a theme, Amy stated simply that she was not at a point where she could express anger at her abusers, nor could she visualize herself ever reaching such a point. Yet 2 weeks later, she eagerly and with much laughter recounted to me in therapy how she had puzzled her counselor earlier that day; to his question about what she hoped to become, she had replied, "*A bitch with a bad attitude*" making reference to the song of that title (Adegabalola, n.d.). Amy finally felt that she had the right to be angry, to express that anger, and to refuse to be abused or to be blamed for the abuse any longer. As in one of her favorite lines from that song, "It's better to be pissed off than pissed on".

This remarkable progress for Amy from victim to strong survivor is clearly evidenced in the songs she wrote in music therapy. Amy took to songwriting

immediately. For her, the written word seemed a safe way to express herself. At the end of our first session on songwriting, Amy brought me a copy of a poem she had written previously when she had attempted suicide. In songwriting, Amy had no difficulty finding the right words and those words clearly reflected her progress.

Amy's first song, written with the Clozé technique, clearly reflects her state of mind when she first came to the women's shelter.

#### Amy's Song

This is a song about Amy  
Determined, survivor  
Broken, safe, and hopeful  
Mending, roaming, searching, desperately seeking  
Amy

In her second song, with its original lyrics written to the melody of *Hand in My Pocket* (Morissette, 1996), Amy expressed some of her conflicting emotions at that time--the harm she suffered, yet the hope for a new life, one of peace of mind and serenity. Amy felt strongly about her repeated line, "I've closed my mouth and opened up my ears", commenting that it reflected her desire to listen and learn from her mistakes. I believe it also reflects the stage Amy was at during the time she wrote it--a time when she still felt considerable self-blame for the abuse and a time when her voice was still silenced.

## Me and Serenity

I'm homeless but I'm safe  
I'm listening but learning  
I'm humble but I'm as low as I can go  
I'm lonely but wiser  
I find joy in small children  
Now simple things give me inner peace  
And what it all comes down to is that I'm looking for  
serenity  
I've closed my mouth and opened up my ears

I'm confused but I'm hanging  
I'm wise but lack wisdom  
I'm safe but I want more, yeah  
I found joy in the others  
I still need my inner peace  
I'm low but I'm gonna rise, yeah  
And what it all comes down to is I'm looking for me  
My mouth's still closed and my ears still opened.

Amy's third and final song reflects a remarkable difference. In *Here Comes Amy*, with its original lyrics and original music, no longer is Amy a silenced woman. In good-humored fashion, Amy gives voice to her anger, holding her abusers responsible for the violence. But *Here Comes Amy* is not just a song of anger and resistance. It is a song celebrating her new found life and her new found ability to value herself.

### Here Comes Amy

I prayed to God and got away  
Now son of a bitch you're gonna pay  
I'm signing your card, putting it in the mail  
Happy Mother's Day babe, I hope you rot in hell  
I've got your name on the soul of my shoe  
Watch out now, You don't know what I'll do

Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have some fun  
Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have me some fun

Home, family, and friends are back so far  
Hopefully soon I'll come up with a car  
My psyche is strong, another human won't break  
The burden on my heart is no longer an ache  
You controlled my life like a cancerous mole  
Now I have my life, but you're still an asshole

Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have some fun  
Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have me some fun

I'm happy, happy having fun  
I'm happy, happy having fun

You say you teach love with every hit  
I learned loser you're full of shit  
I'm out on my own and lovin' Amy  
If I were a big man you'd be totin' a bruise  
Your bridges you are burning out fast  
I pray for all victims that I was the last

Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have some fun  
Watch out world 'cause here comes Amy  
I'm claiming my spot gonna have me some fun

I'm happy, happy having fun  
I'm happy, happy having fun

In discussing the recording of her song, Amy had been adamant that I should record it for her, saying that she had no voice for it. At the very last minute, having heard Nancy and Julie record their own songs, Amy asked if she might also record her song. Although she had thought she would recite it, I suggested she try singing it in the blues style in which it had originally been composed. With microphone in hand and with some initial trepidation, Amy started to sing her song, surprising both of us with her deep and strong voice. Amy had truly found her own genuine voice.

## Evaluation

The results of Amy's pretest TSCS indicated profile validity and a very low self-esteem, with a Total Positive score of 304 placing her in the 8th percentile. Her post-test TSCS, with profile validity as well, showed a marked increase in her overall self-esteem (increasing from the 8th to the 46th percentile) as well as a marked increase in all of the individual categories (see Table 9). As a result, Amy's self-esteem had increased such that it fell well within the normal range by the end of the study.

Score Category	Score		T-Score		Percentile	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test	Pretest	Post-test
Total Positive	304	344	36	48	8th	46th
Identity	123	131	46	53	35th	60th
Self-Satisfaction	90	109	40	53	18th	60th
Behavior	91	104	30	38	3rd	16th
Physical Self	56	65	30	41	3rd	20th
Moral-Ethical	71	73	50	53	50th	60th
Personal	46	64	26	49	1st	48th
Family	65	72	43	51	25th	52nd
Social Self	66	70	46	52	35th	58th

**Table 9. Amy's Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results**

As with the results of her TSCS, the results of Amy's final interview reflected a marked increase in her self-esteem and self-confidence. Amy, in response to a request to describe herself in terms of power and independence, commented, "*I feel much more*

*powerful now. I feel very independent. . . I have found out in the past 3 weeks that I'm the most important thing. I'm going to take care of me. I'm going to be independent".* Amy described the experience for women growing up in our culture, saying,

*Well, the way we're raised to be so subordinate to men--I think it's sad. I think it's sad. I think we need to be warned about these controllers and these abusers. It's more rampant than people realize. And I see that from being in this center. I felt like I was the only victim. But there are thousands of women out there.*

When asked to describe herself, Amy commented

*Like I told you, I'm fixin' to be [a moment of silence], what the, the [Interview Comment: you can say it on tape], the bitch with an attitude. I'm talking about, I, I have found so much of myself that I like and I have found out that I have a lot of good in me. And it's him that's missing it, and by him I mean any man that I have been abused by mentally or physically. It's them that are lacking. I'm a good person.*

In a similar vein, when asked if she valued herself, Amy responded, "I never have in the past, but I do now. Strongly". This strength and her new sense of independence was also reflected in Amy's comments about her hopes for future intimate relationships.

*I had told you before that I didn't think I would ever want another relationship with a man. I'm past that because everybody is not bad. You know, I know God's in a lot of people and everybody's not bad. So I know I'll have another man in my life. But I will never take another man in my house. I will always have my own place. If we choose to live together, I will still have my own place. I, I, I won't be, I pray to God, I won't be abused again.*

When asked to describe her experiences in music therapy, Amy replied that



*I told the shelter coordinator . . . that this is one of the things that has brought me out more, because they keep saying that they can tell the difference in my eyes . . . But I've been able, when I met you I was crying and I had so, I thought so little of myself, you know, I thought I was ugly and stupid and. I, I know I'm a smart person. I wouldn't be a nurse if I wasn't a smart person. I know I'm intelligent. He had beat that out of me, you know. I've regained my self-confidence . . . and I look forward to my emotional music therapy. And when I go into that therapy group I try to, to put into words, into my music my feelings that are happening at that time. And I can tell the changes in me from when we write our different stuff each week.*

In response to a question about what she had learned about herself in music therapy, Amy replied

*I learned I'm worthy. I'm as good a person, God loves me as much as he does any other person. No one else better than me. And when I came in this group, I didn't think I was worthy to sit in that room with anybody, you know. I really didn't. . . But now, I feel like I can hang with the best of them, you know. I've got my confidence back and the music, you know, listening to other people and then I write my own thing and it's like, hey, you know, mine's just as good as theirs.*

Amy went on to further describe the experience of listening to other women's songs, commenting,

*It made me realize that I wasn't stupid. I was manipulated. That, that helped, hearing that the other, I'm, I'm sorry they had to deal with it, but now I know I'm not the only one. I'm not crazy. I was beginning to doubt my sanity because I was accepting all the abuse.*

Discussing the experience of songwriting, Amy stated,

*Oh, you saw me glowing in there like a light bulb! I'm still lit up now. I'm so excited I can't stand it and it looks so professional. I think if people heard it, they'd love my song! I do. I mean especially if you read, what you read, I think you read it, the poem I, I wrote right before I tried to commit suicide. That was, that was when I was sick. Now you can see I'm well. . . I'm strong.*

Finally, in summing up what she would take with her from the music therapy experience, Amy said,

*My song and my tape will never leave me! . . . But, um, I'll keep the, I really do feel nobody will ever be able to break my spirit again. I had, my soul wasn't gone, but my spirit was totally crushed, and I've gotten it back a lot through this music and nobody's gonna take my spirit from me again. I'm a happy person and, I mean everybody has up and down days, but nobody's gonna take my spirit away.*

## **Discussion**

In this final section of the dissertation, an opportunity has been given to hear the voices of individual women and their own particular experiences in feminist music therapy. In working with these women, I have learned much--about their experiences, about the fragility of the human spirit on the one hand and its resilience, when nurtured, on the other hand, about myself, and about the integration of feminist principles within my music therapy work. I have seen women move from unfamiliarity with music therapy, uncertainty as to what it might offer them, and even, for some, reluctance to participate in such a thing when they were hurting so much, to eager anticipation and surprised delight in themselves and their music. There were times when they were no more surprised than I at this transformation and at the power of music in their lives.

The integration of feminist principles within a music therapy context was for me in some ways quite readily accomplished, yet in other ways a most challenging task. I had already been moving towards much of the feminist approach prior to any formal development of feminist music therapy. With an intuitive sense of their rightness, I had been incorporating such feminist therapy principles as the importance of egalitarian client-therapist relationships and of all relationships of friendship and love, the importance of social and political change, and the importance of women's issues and of women themselves, their perspectives, their values, and their experiences. That which was new to me, and subsequently a greater challenge to incorporate in my clinical practice, was the importance in therapy of feminist analysis of power and of gender-role socialization. To explore this feminist analysis is essential to feminist music therapy, yet so too is ensuring that the process is accomplished within the parameters of an egalitarian client-therapist relationship. For a therapist to avoid the pitfall of adopting the role of expert while pursuing this feminist analysis at first seems difficult. Yet, I found in my actual clinical practice that music itself effectively eliminated this pitfall. In using as an impetus for discussion the songs of women which addressed issues of power and gender-role socialization, I was able to explore feminist analysis on a much more even footing with the women participants. We were simply a group of women discussing issues raised by various songs--chosen both by myself and the other women. In this way, music served as an effective and very powerful co-therapist. This facilitated the process considerably for me of the integration of feminist therapy principles.

Two issues challenging all feminist therapists in their practice are those of race and class differences. In the matter of race difference, it was once again music which made meeting this challenge an easier task. While I could not speak of or to the experiences of women of color growing up in a racist and sexist culture, the songs of women of color could. Group discussions of these songs made it possible to address complex issues not otherwise readily addressed in interracial therapeutic relationships; this was particularly true when the women of color participants felt comfortable enough to discuss their experiences among themselves without feeling the need to educate me or the other White members of the group. When the music discussed was that which I had specifically purchased and brought in at their request, the results were even more empowering, allowing the women to be experts of their own music and their own experiences.

The issue of class and of educational differences was perhaps more problematic. Some of the women expressed reservation and embarrassment about their expressive writing abilities--particularly if I or the other group members were going to see it. For some, I started by taking dictation. For all, however, it was the music as co-therapist which once again solved the problem. In listening to a diversity of powerful songs written by powerful women in a variety of styles--from very simple to complex, from everyday language to poetic--the women participants were empowered. They discovered, and some indeed said, "*I could have written that*" and "*I could have written like that*".

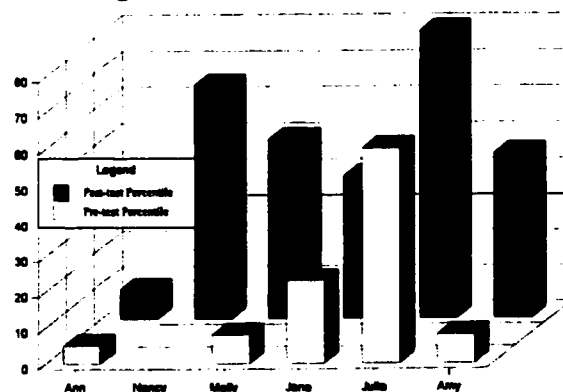
In discussing the ease and the difficulty for me in putting feminist therapy principles into practice in music therapy, the importance of group work should not be

overlooked. Some have argued that women do not need therapy; they simply need to talk with other women friends about their experiences. Brown (1994) agrees but goes further to say that women in the 1990's rarely have this opportunity just to "chat with other women" and so, rather than supplanting woman talk, feminist therapy provides a much needed opportunity for it. This lack of opportunity is certainly even more true of abused women. Subsequently, it was when the women participants in feminist music therapy perceived their experience as simply time spent chatting with good friends, that I believe they were most empowered. In the words of one of the women, Jane, "*Oh, I like 'em [experiences in music therapy]. And then listening to music and then just sitting down and relaxing and, and just laughing. I like that*". In feminist music therapy, the women were able to participate as members in group song discussions, as individuals within a group in writing and recording their individual songs, and as a group in listening to each other's original compositions--providing both validation and inspiration to each other in finding their own voices.

These women's voices became the focus of careful attention in the final section of the dissertation in an attempt to answer the research question, "Is feminist music therapy effective in the empowerment of women who have been abused by their intimate male partners?". Because of the unpredictable nature of abused women's lives, this question was examined by means of a case-study approach, looking more specifically at the effects of feminist music therapy on their self-esteem as seen by means of a standardized self-esteem test--the TSCS--and qualitative content analysis of original songs and individual interviews.

Of the six women included in the data collection portion of the study, four showed a marked increase in their post-test TSCS scores (see Figure 4). Of the other two women, one (Ann) showed a minimal increase (from the 5th to the 8th percentile) which might have been greater if not for a decreased Family score (not surprising for abused women). Her Self-Satisfaction score did show an increase--from the 10th to the 34th percentile. For the other woman (Nancy), it was not possible to draw definite conclusions about any change in her self-esteem since her pre-test results lacked profile validity. Her post-test TSCS scores did, however, have profile validity and did indicate self-esteem within the normal range at the 65th percentile. Of the four women whose self-esteem showed marked improvements, Molly's increased from the 8th to the 50th percentile, Jane's from the 23rd to the 40th, Julie's from the 60th to the 80th, and Amy's from the 8th to the 46th percentile. Clearly the majority of women saw an increase in their self-esteem during the course of the study. Yet, because of the nature of a case-study approach, it is not possible to definitively identify any single factor as solely responsible for this increased self-esteem in the case of the TSCS results alone. The same, however, cannot be said of the

**Figure 4. Overall TSCS Results**



results of the women's interviews and songs.

Within the final interview, all of the women gave voice to the meaning feminist music therapy held for them. The rich detail of their interview responses made it possible to identify the powerful impact of feminist music therapy in their lives. That the women's interview answers contained both positive and negative responses as well as unsolicited details is indicative of their comfort with and candor in the interview process. For example, when asked if she valued herself, Ann replied, *"I don't. Really. Much. Value myself. . . as a person, I'm, I, I don't like being alone with me."* As well, rather than simply answer yes or no to an interview question, the women elaborated upon the issue in their answers, volunteering specific details to generally-worded, open-ended questions. For example, when asked simply to describe herself, Nancy gave a lengthy and detailed response: *"I'm neat, understanding, independent, powerful, curious [laughter]. And basically just an on-going person--get along with everybody, you know. Not hard to get along with."* Julie, when asked to describe her experiences in music therapy, indicated not only that it was a positive experience, but also gave specific details about its meaning for her:

*It was, uh, more emotional therapy, you know, because some part was putting your feelings into music . . . It was just, it was the way I expressed myself that made it good. And that really helped me out emotionally. Made me sit down every Monday and every Wednesday and just think a little more.*

The manner in which their interview responses mirrored the words and feelings of their original songs was striking--for example, Julie both spoke and sang about *"not having to take your shit anymore"* and Amy both spoke and sang about becoming *"a bitch*

*with an attitude*". Also striking was the power of those songs to reflect the changes experienced by each women, to reflect their growing power.

When taken in conjunction by means of triangulation, these three measures--the results of the TSCS, the interviews, and the women's own songs--make it possible to identify feminist music therapy as effective in empowering women who have been abused by their intimate male partners. The testimony of each of the six women in these case studies is indeed compelling. They have moved in feminist music therapy from finding their own voices and stories in the songs of other women to finding the courage to give voice to their stories in their own songs, to finding the value of their own voices such that they were able to record those songs. Their experience in feminist music therapy has truly been one of singing subversion, singing soul. It is only fitting, therefore, that the final words of this dissertation belong to these voices of subversion and of soul:

*My soul wasn't gone, but my spirit was totally crushed. And I've gotten back a lot through this music . . . I'm fixin' to be a bitch with an attitude. . . Nobody's gonna take my spirit from me again. (Amy, 1996)*

*"No, not anymore." (Julie, 1996).*



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# Appendixes

## **Appendix A: Consent Form**

I consent to participate in a study involving music therapy. I am aware that should I be selected, I shall be asked to participate in twice-weekly, 90-minute music therapy sessions for 8 weeks. I shall also be asked to complete two standardized pencil-and-paper tests and an audiotaped personal interview. If I no longer wish to participate, I may quit at any time without it affecting the services I receive. I understand that the results will be used in a research project and may later be published, but that my name will be held confidential.

---

Signature

---

Date

## **Appendix B: Initial Interview**

---

**NAME**

---

**AGE**

**RACE**

**MARITAL STATUS:**

☐ single/never married

☐ separated/divorced

☐ widowed

**ANNUAL INCOME:**

☐ less than 10,000

☐ 20,000 - 29,000

☐ 40,000 - 49,000

☐ more

☐ 10,000 - 19,000

☐ 30,000 - 39,000

☐ 50,000 - 59,000

**Briefly describe your experience of abuse:**

## **Appendix C: Final Interview**

1. How would you describe yourself in terms of power? Independence? Does this reflect a change in your views? [If so] In what way?
2. What would you like people to understand about your experience of abuse? About that of women facing similar experiences?
3. What do you think it means growing up female in today's society? What messages do we receive about being female? About women's relationships with men? From whom?
4. What about growing up male? What are the messages boys and men receive?
5. In general, how would you describe yourself? Who are you? How does that make you feel?
6. Do you think women are valued in our society? Should they be? What do you think it is about women and their experiences that is of value?
7. What does it mean to you to value yourself? Do you? [If so] In what ways? Does this reflect any change in your thinking or actions?
8. What do you see for yourself in the way of future intimate relationships? What are you looking for or hoping for? What are you expecting?
9. What of the abusive relationship was the most harmful to you? In what other ways were you harmed?
10. Tell me about your efforts to recover from this harm? In what ways has there been success? With what are you still struggling?

- 11 How would you describe your experiences in music therapy? What changes, if any, have you undergone since first starting music therapy.
- 12 What did you learn about yourself in music?
- 13 What did the experience of listening to women's songs mean for you?
- 14 What did the experience of writing [and recording] your own songs mean for you?
- 15 What will you take from with you from the experience? Is there anything else you would like to say?

## Appendix D: Women's Original Music

### A Mother's Gift

Amin

Emin

1

Walked in my room the o - ther eve - ning

Emin

Amin

3

A lit - tle child of 8 years I was sleep - ing he was

Emin

Amin


6

creep - ing Thought I saw his fa - ther there

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of three lines of music. The first line starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, guitar chord diagrams are provided for 'Amin' and 'Emin'. The second line continues the melody with a quarter rest, followed by eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, guitar chord diagrams for 'Emin' and 'Amin' are shown. The third line continues the melody with a quarter rest, followed by eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, guitar chord diagrams for 'Emin' and 'Amin' are shown. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes.


# Maybe

E A G




1 I came in through the door af - ter a long and tir - ing

E A G



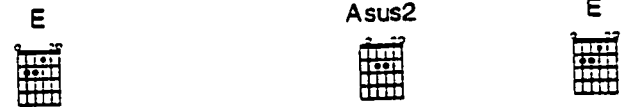
5 day I lay my head down on the ta - ble and

E Asus2



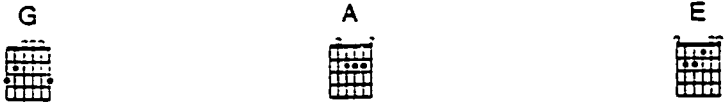
9 said I think I'll pray Then I laughed and said just

E Asus2 E




13 kid - ding but there's some - thing that's just not right here I

G A E



16



don't have a clue what that some-thing could be but there's some-thing that just ain't right

E




19




here\_\_\_\_\_

G E A E




24




May-be it's my all-er-gies\_\_\_\_\_ May-be I'm get-ting a cold\_\_\_\_\_

A E Asus2 E



28



May-be it is my per-i-od or may-be I'm just get-ting old





May - be I'm go - ing through men - o - pause — may - be I need to get

G



A



E

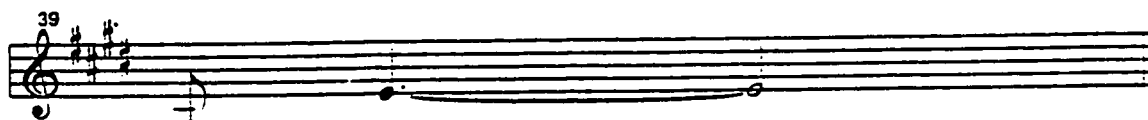


Asus2



laid No it's not that I have to it's more that I need to Yes I want to get

E



la —————

id —————

# To Be Free

Amin

Amin6

1

G

Amin

The words in the pa - per were plain and sim - ple no ap -

par - ent e - mo - tion a - ttached The head - line sta - ted stark - ly

Asus2

G

Amin

7

"Crime Di - gest, De - cem - ber first nine - teen nine - ty five Un - der neath laid out in

Dmin

Amin

G

11

neat lit - tle col - umns count - less sto - ries of o - ther peo - ple's lives But

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked with a '1' at the beginning. The score is divided into four systems. The first system contains measures 1-3, with lyrics 'The words in the pa - per were plain and sim - ple no ap -'. The second system contains measures 4-6, with lyrics 'par - ent e - mo - tion a - ttached The head - line sta - ted stark - ly'. The third system contains measures 7-9, with lyrics '"Crime Di - gest, De - cem - ber first nine - teen nine - ty five Un - der neath laid out in'. The fourth system contains measures 10-12, with lyrics 'neat lit - tle col - umns count - less sto - ries of o - ther peo - ple's lives But'. Chord diagrams are provided for each measure: Amin (measures 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11), Amin6 (measure 3), G (measures 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12), Asus2 (measure 4), Dmin (measure 10), and Amin6 (measure 12).

Amin



14 3

one wo - man's sto - ry not so much diff - erent from the re - st caught my eye

Dmin



Amin



Dmin



Amin



18

All I ask is that you hear my voice and lis - ten to my story Like

Dmin



Amin



G



23

all o - ther wo - men seek - ing safe - ty we want to be

Amin

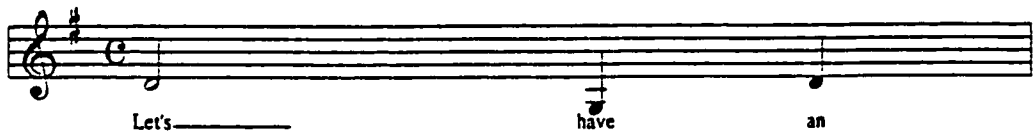


26

free

# Sacrifices

Csus2

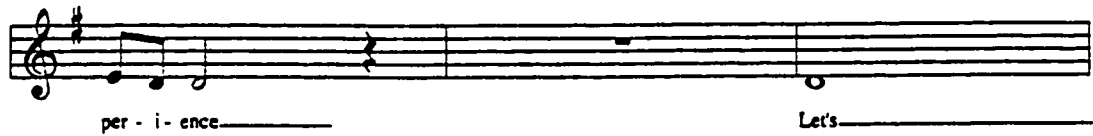


GMaj6



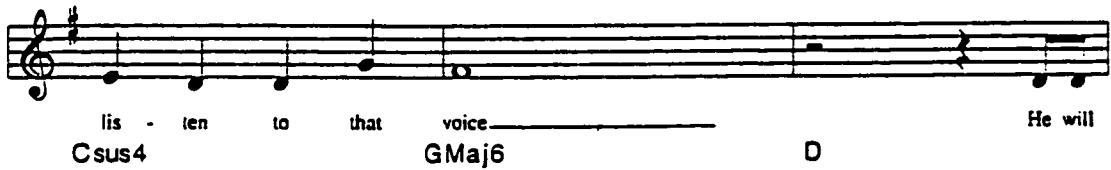
Amin6

Csus4



GMaj6

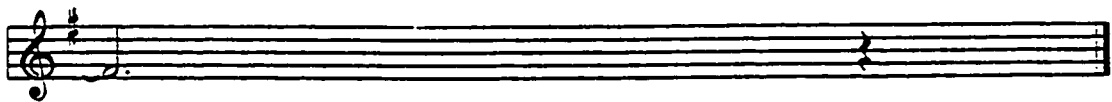
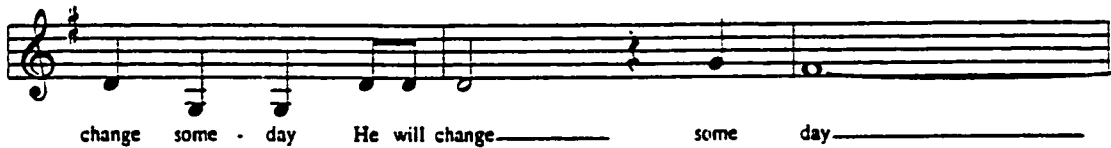
D



Csus4

GMaj6

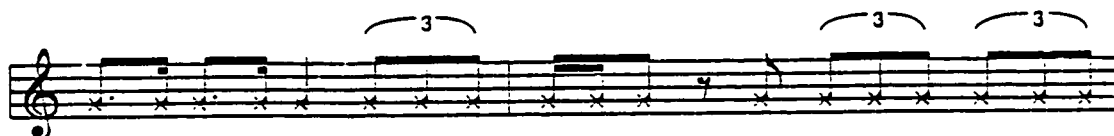
D



# Not Anymore



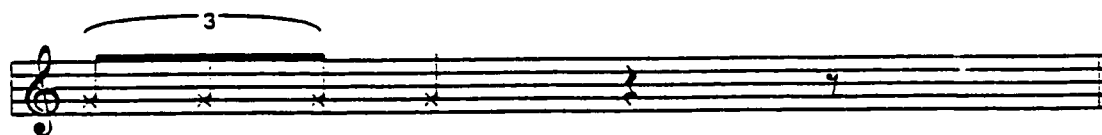
There comes a time in a wo-man's life when she does - n't



want to be a-lone She wants that peace of mind. the need to be touched by a



strong man with strong hands. the kind that turns her on.



But not any - more

# Here Comes Amy

E7 A7

1 I prayed to God and got a - way. Now son of a bitch you're

E7

5 go - nna pay. I'm si - gn - ing your card putt - ing it in the mail Ha - ppy

A7 B7 A7

8 Mo - ther's Day babe I hope you ro - t in hell. I've got your name on the

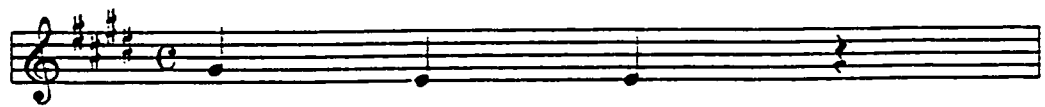
E7 A7 B7

12 soul of my shoe Watch out now You don't know what I'll do.

A7 E7 A7

16 Watch out world 'cause here comes Am - y I'm claim - ing my spot go - nna

E7



have

some

fun

A7

E7

B7

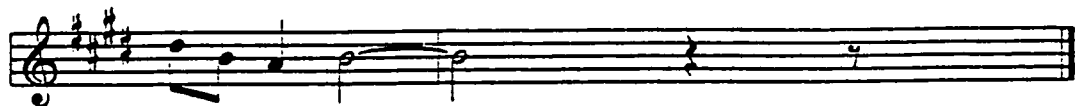


Watch out world 'cause her comes Am - y

I'm claim - ing my spot gon - na

C7

B7



have me some fun